BAHA'I HISTORY

DECEMBER

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☐ Table of Contents

1. December 1. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "that although Abdu'l-Bahá's station is not that of a Manifestation of God, nevertheless supplications may be addressed to Him. It is essential, however, that every believer should realize that while doing so he is directing his thoughts ..." (was #161)

2. December 1. On this date in 1866, Marion Jack was born in Saint John, New Brunswick. An early Canadian Bahá'í, she converted to the Bahá'í Faith in Paris, and went on to teach English to the family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Akká for a short time. From 1931 until her death in 1954, she lived in Bulgaria. (was #160)

3. December 1. On this date in 2005, the head of state of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, President Kessai Note, paid an official visit to the Baha'i World Centre with his wife, Mary Note. They were welcomed by UHJ member Peter Khan and his wife Janet Khan. (was #159)

4. December 1. On this date in 2011, Ian Semple, a former UHJ member from its establishment in 1963 until 2005, died in Switzerland. He had also served as a member of the NSA of the British Isles, of the Auxiliary Board for Propagation in Europe and of the International Baha'i Council. (was #158)

5. December 2. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "A true and adequate knowledge of the Cause is, indeed, indispensable to every one who wishes to successfully teach the Message. The book of "Gleanings" gives the friends a splendid opportunity to acquire this necessary knowledge and ..." (was #157)

6. December 2. On this date in 1935, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer urged "the friends to make a thorough study of the Qur'an as the knowledge of this Sacred Scripture is absolutely indispensable for every believer" (was #156)

7. December 2. On this date in 1982, the UHJ wrote about the deletion of "objectionable passages" in Ustad Salmani's "My Memories of Bahá'u'lláh" noting it "untimely and unwise" to publish passages where believers refer to him as "You being God, Uncle" and other "unpleasant and unworthy" stories. (was #155)

8. December 2. On this date in 1957, the title to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, the Mansion of Bahji and all other buildings and lands that had been owned by the Covenant-breakers were passed to Israel's branch of the U.S. NSA. (was #154)

9. December 2. On this date in 1928, Ian Semple was born in New Barnett, England. A former UHJ member from its establishment in 1963 until 2005, he had also served as a member of the NSA of the British Isles, of the Auxiliary Board for Propagation in Europe and of the International Baha'i Council. (was #153)

10. December 3. On this date in 1929, Shoghi Effendi wrote Queen Marie, "I have received through the intermediary of my dear Bahá'í sister Miss Martha Root, the autograph portrait of Your Majesty, ...I shall treasure this most excellent portrait... strikingly beautiful a photograph of a Queen..." (was #152)

11. December 3. On this date in 1842, Phoebe Hearst was born. She was an early Bahá'í, a wealthy philanthropist, the wife of Senator George Hearst, and the mother of publisher William Randolph Hearst. She later became estranged from the Bahá'í Faith due to being extorted for money by other Bahá'ís. (was #151)

12. December 3. On this date in 1975, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Ecuador "As to the law of burial, the Universal House of Justice suggests that you confine your statement to the following parts of this law which are now binding on the believers in the West." (was #150)

13. December 3. On this date in 1940, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís "the solitary champion of the Faith in the Western World...the torchbearer of the New, the World Civilization which is destined to supplant in the fulness of time the present one." (was #149)

14. December 3. On this date in 1982, Hand of the Cause of God and Custodian Paul Haney died after sustaining injuries in a car accident in Haifa. (was #148)

15. December 4. On this date in 1963, the UHJ wrote an NSA that "the law requiring consent of parents before marriage...is a law of great importance affecting the very foundation of human society." (was #147)

16. December 4. On this date in 1963, the UHJ wrote an NSA that "in the Bahá'í Faith the spiritual and administrative aspects are complementary and that the social laws of the Faith are as binding as the purely spiritual ones." (was #146)

17. December 4. On this date in 1919, 'Abdu'l Baha "was created by King George V a K.B.E. for valuable services rendered to the British Government in the early days of the Occupation," subsequent to the September 23, 1918, capture of Haifa by General Allenby's British forces from the Ottomans... (was #145)

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21. December 4. On this date in 1954, Leroy Ioas wrote "The beloved Guardian has directed me to write you... that the Israel Branch of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada was to be established, and land on Mount Carmel registered in your name..." (was #141)

22. December 5. On this date in 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá returned to Haifa, concluding his journeys to the West. On this date in 2013, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter to the Bahá'ís of the World commemorating this event, noting ..." (was #140)

23. December 5. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The people of the world not only need the laws and principles of the Bahá'í Faith--they desperately need to see the love that is engendered by it in the hearts of its followers..." (was #139)

24. December 6. On this date in 1965, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States titled "Reasons for Delay in Translating and Publishing the Kitab-i-Aqdas." (was #138)

25. December 6. On this date in 2008, four of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and three in the United States (Portland, Chicago, and Atlanta). (was #137)

26. December 6. On this date in 1919, Owen Battrick was born in England. He pioneered to New Caledonia, served on the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific Islands as secretary, on the NSA of New Zealand as treasurer, and as an Auxiliary Board member and Counsellor for Australasia. (was #136)

27. Baha'i History - December 6. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote "There is no objection that the believers look at the picture of Bahá'u'lláh, but they should do so with the utmost reverence, and should also not allow that it be exposed openly to the public, even in their private homes." (was #135)

28. December 7. On this date in 1969, the UHJ wrote regarding "the relationship between the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice," noting "Shoghi Effendi's statement that 'Without such an institution [the Guardianship] ... the necessary guidance to define the sphere of ...'" (was #134)

29. December 7. On this date in 1952, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to Abba Hushi, the Mayor of Haifa, addressing him as "Your Worship." (was #133)

30. December 7. On this date in 1983, Yvonne Liegois died. Born in Paris, France, she would later move to Bolivia where she became a Bahá'í. Although Marina Núñez del Prado was the first Bolivian Bahá'í, she did not remain active, so Yvonne Liegois Cuellar is recognized as the first Bahá'í in Bolivia. (was #132)

31. December 7. On this date in 1999, the Continental Board of Counsellors sent a compilation prepared by the of Bahá'í World Centre titled "Non-association with Covenant-breakers" to the NSAs of Alaska, Canada, and the Untied States. (was #131)

32. December 8. On this date in 1967, the Universal House of Justice wrote "... the great Plan of God, tumultuous in its progress, working through mankind as a whole, tearing down barriers to world unity and forging humankind into a unified body in the fires of suffering and experience." (was #130)

33. December 8. On this date in 1967, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to an individual believer in an "attempt to clarify some of the points which bewilder you in the relationship of Bahá'ís to politics." (was #129)

34. December 8. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "It is not sufficient for a believer merely to accept and observe the teachings. He should, in addition, cultivate the sense of spirituality which he can acquire chiefly by means of prayer." (was #128)

35. December 9. On this date in 1985, an attachment to a letter written on behalf of the UHJ to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Netherlands delineated the "restrictions and limitations" imposed on "one who has lost his voting rights is considered to be a Bahá'í but not one in good standing." (was #127)

36. December 9. On this date in 1984, the UHJ wrote an NSA "cannot itself arrange for the cremation of the remains of a Bahá'í even if it was that person's wish ... Bahá'í relatives, likewise, are under the obligation of obeying the Bahá'í law and must not agree to the cremation of a Bahá'í." (was #126)

37. December 9. On this date in 1956, Juliet Thompson died. On November 15, 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk at the home of Juliet Thompson in New York. Earlier that year, on June 1, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had his first sitting for his portrait painted by Juliet Thompson in her New York studio. (was #125)

38. December 9. On this date in 1984, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Germany "if a Bahá'í makes a provision in his will that is contrary to Bahá'í law, that provision is null and void in Bahá'í law, and neither the Bahá'í relatives nor the Spiritual Assembly are permitted to fulfil it." (was #124)

39. December 9. On this date in 1931, Shoghi Effendi wrote "It is our duty, we who have been trusted with the task of applying the divine remedy given by Bahá'u'lláh...not rest until the peace foretold by the Prophets of God is permanently established." (was #123)

40. December 9. On this date in 1909, Gertrude Blum, later named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Solomon Islands, was born. (was #122)

41. December 10. On this date in 1964, Alyce Janssen, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Spanish Morocco, died in Santa Rosa, California. (was #121)

42. December 10. On this date in 1898, the first Western pilgrims arrived in 'Akká. Led by Ibrahim George Kheiralla, the group included Phoebe Hearst, Lua Getsinger, May Maxwell, and Robert Turner. In 'Akká, they witnessed first hand the conflict between `Abdu'l-Bahá and his brothers. (was #120)

43. December 10. On this date in 1992, the UHJ published a compilation titled "Issues Related to the Study of the Bahá'í Faith" on the nature of opposition to the Bahá'í Faith from within academia, identifying "the principal roots of the problem." (was #119)

44. December 10. On this date in 1981, the UHJ wrote "Bahá'í authors, writing about the Faith, are requested to have their work approved for publication by the National Spiritual Assembly of the country where such work is published." (was #118)

45. December 10. On this date in 2014, a letter regarding Kalimat Press was received by the UHJ, who noted Kalimat "was pursuing a particular editorial agenda, offering certain titles that were not in keeping with the best interests of the Faith" therefore LSAs "no longer distribute its publications." (was #117)

46. Baha'i History - December 10. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'í's "The friends should not feel unnecessarily agitated, but should have full confidence in the future which, we firmly believe, is gloriously bright." (was #116)

47. December 10. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'í's "Convey to believers the joyful news of the safe delivery on Mt. Carmel of a consignment of thirty-two granite monolith columns, part of the initial shipment of material ordered for construction of the arcade of the Báb's..." (was #115)

48. December 11. On this date in 1994, the UHJ's Research Department responded to a letter "about the reason that the prayers of the Guardian are not translated into English" noting "the Universal House of Justice instructs us to advise that it does not feel that the time has come for this to be done. (was #114)

49. December 11. On this date in 1952, Shoghi Effendi wrote "It should not be overlooked, however, that the most powerful and effective teaching medium that has been found so far is the fireside meeting, because in the fireside meeting, intimate personal questions can be answered, and the student ..." (was #113)

50. December 11. On this date in 1972, Gretta Lamprill, the first Tasmanian Baha'i, died. She was the inaugural secretary of the Hobart LSA, a secretary of the NSA of Australia and New Zealand and a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Society Islands. She was known as the "Mother of Tasmania". (was #112)

51. December 11. On this date in 1979, the UHJ answered a question about "if, prior to local elections an enrolled believer withdraws from the Faith and this leads to the removal of his name from Bahá'í membership, and yet he is subsequently elected to the Local Assembly" (was #111)

52. December 11. On this date in 1890, Mark Tobey was born. An American painter who converted to the Bahá'í Faith at Green Acre, he eventually settled in Switzerland in Switzerland in the early 1960s with his companion, Pehr Hallsten, with whom he had lived together since 1940. (was #110)

53. December 11. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote an individual "expressing concern that the provision of the Bahá'í marriage law requiring consent of living natural parents creates a double standard in your family because you have adopted children as well as your own." (was #109)

54. December 12. On this date in 2011, the UHJ addressed a letter stating "it gives us pleasure to inform you that we have created an International Advisory Board to assist the Ruhi Institute in overseeing its system for the preparation, production, and distribution of materials..." (was #108)

55. December 12. On this date in 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote "At all times we must look at the greatness of the Cause, and remember that Bahá'u'lláh will assist all who arise in His service. When we look at ourselves, we are sure to feel discouraged by our shortcomings and insignificance!" (was #107)

56. December 12. On this date in 1971, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum arrived in Matadi, Zaïre, during one of her many travels, as documented in Violette Nakhjavani's "The Great Safari of Hand of the Cause Rúhíyyih Khánum". (was #106)

57. December 12. On this date in 1844, corresponding to the 1st of Dhu'l-Hijjah in the Hijri calendar, the Báb entered Mecca with his stalwart companion Quddús and an Ethiopian slave named Mubárak, and in front of the Kaaba declared himself the Qā'im. (was #105)

58. December 13. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi received a letter from the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs stating "I am pleased to inform you of my decision to establish in our Ministry a separate Department for the Bahá'í Faith. I hope that this department will be of assistance to you..." (was #104)

59. December 13. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote "disloyalty and dishonourable conduct of the members of the Master's Family, and now his own family. They have not only disobeyed him, and flouted his advice and instructions, but done things which are so shameful he is unable to mention..." (was #103)

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61. December 13. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi sent a cable titled "Old and New Covenant-Breakers" noting "increasing boldness, marked, tragic decline in character and spiritual condition grandchildren 'Abdu'l-Bahá." (was #101)

62. December 13. On this date in 1940, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Bahá'í youth should...be advised, nay even encouraged, to contract marriage while still young and in full possession of their physical vigour." (was #100)

63. December 13. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the very nature of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, has been vouchsafed to man through institutions in this world; namely the Guardianship at present; and also in the future, the International House of Justice." (was #99)

64. December 13. On this date in 2008, three of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Stamford, one in Dallas, and one in Los Angeles. (was #98)

65. December 13. On this date in 1990, the UHJ's Research Department published a Memorandum addressing Bahá'í interpretations of the prophecies contained in Daniel 12:11-12 and modifications made to John Esslemont's "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era" subsequent to the failure of these prophecies. (was #97)

66. December 14. On this date in 1970, the UHJ wrote that "if the non-Bahá'í parents of a youth under fifteen permit their child to be a Bahá'í, we have no objection whatsoever from the point of view of our Teachings to permitting such a youth to declare as a Bahá'í, regardless of age." (was #96)

67. December 14. On this date in 1871, Albert Schwarz, an early German Bahá'í who served as the inaugural Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria when it was established in 1922, was born. He served on that body as Chairman until his death. (was #95)

68. December 14. On this date in 1957, Leroy Ioas wrote "There are the vast number of French Canadians who are of Catholic persuasion. They would make fine Bahá'ís, and if representative members could be brought into the Faith, it will add prestige to the Faith, and help solidify its institutions." (was #94)

69. December 14. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi listed the "chief objectives of Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry... the first was the establishment of the Cause in America. The erection of the Bahá'í Temple in Ishqabad and the building on Mt. Carmel of a mausoleum marking the resting-place of the Bab." (was #93)

70. December 14. On this date in 1998, Robert F. Riggs re-published a book titled "The Apocalypse: An Exegesis." (was #92)

71. December 15. On this date in 1937, "The Palestine Post" had an article titled "Internationalism" stating "the death in Haifa on Friday last at the age of 83 of Behe Mohammed Ali, head of the local Bahai Community, calls attention to the Bahai Sect and its founder about which this article has been (was #91)

72. December 15. On this date in 1994, the UHJ replied to an individual asking "concerning the degrees of authority possessed by Bahá'í historical sources, the process by which translations are authorized, the development of a "canon of Bahá'í doctrine," the status of documents prepared by the ...." (was #90)

73. December 15. On this day in 1859, L.L. Zamenhof, the creator of Esperanto, was born. December 15 is celebrated in Esperanto culture as Zamenhof Day. (was #89)

74. December 15. On this date in 1922, Shoghi Effendi returned to Haifa. On April 5, 1922, some four months after returning to Haifa subsequent to the death of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi left Haifa with his eldest cousin and close friend Ruhi Afnan for rest and relaxation in the Swiss Alps. (was #88)

75. December 15. On this date in 1945, Emogene Hoagg died in Charleston, South Carolina. She was an early travel-teacher, translator of the Bahá'í writings into Italian, and the first pioneer to Italy. (was #87)

76. December 15. On this date in 1937, "The Palestine Post" reported "the Bahai religion..Its numbers cannot be computed, for it has no ceremonial, no ritual, and no baptism, being based instead on pure thought..Among the peoples of the West, the Bahai credo is disseminated by the New History Society. (was #86)

77. December 16. On this date in 1950, a little over a year after the international recognition of the State of Israel, the mansion at Mazra'a was leased from the Israeli government by the Bahá'í Administrative Order. Bahá'u'lláh lived there from 1877 until 1879, before moving to the Mansion at Bahjí (was #85)

78. December 16. On this date in 1912, the Troy, New York Press published an article stating "'Abdu'l-Bahá was imprisoned for twenty years in a Turkish dungeon because of the unpopularity of his doctrines in that country ... it is said that his following now numbers over 10,000,000." (was #84)

79. December 16. On this date in 1922, Shoghi Effendi cabled American Bahá'ís. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum notes "After his breakdown and withdrawal for a period of time during 1922, he cabled America on 16 December, after his return to Haifa, 'The onward march of the Cause hath not been ...'" (was #83)

80. December 16. On this date in 1921, subsequent to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in Acre on November 28, Shoghi Effendi left England for Palestine accompanied by Lady Blomfield and his eldest sister, Ruhangiz, who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker. (was #82)

81. December 16. On this date in 1998, the Universal House of Justice sent all National Spiritual Assemblies in Africa as well as the International Teaching Centre, the Board of Counsellors in Africa, and all Counsellors in Africa, a document titled "Aspects of Traditional African Culture." (was #81)

82. December 16. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi cabled "Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers...God's avenging hand struck down in the last two months, Avarih, Fareed and Falah." (was #80)

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85. December 17. On this date in 2000, the First International Conference on Modern Religions and Religious Movements in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the Babi and Baha'i Faiths, co-sponsored by the Chair in Baha'i Studies at the Hebrew University and Landegg Academy, began. (was #77)

86. Baha'i History December 17. On this date in 2017, Hartmut Grossmann died in Germany. He served on the NSAs of Germany and Finland and as a Continental Counsellor. In 1988 was appointed to the ITC where he served until being elected to the UHJ in 2003. He served in the UHJ until retiring in 2008. (was #76)

87. December 17. On this date in 1922, two days after returning to Haifa, Shoghi Effendi sent a cable, his first, to the "Blest and beloved ones of 'Abdu'l-Bahá!" On April 5, 1922, some four months after returning to Haifa subsequent to the death of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi left Haifa with his el (was #75)

88. December 17. On this date in 1928, Shoghi Effendi wrote Jessie Revell, a member of the International Bahá’í Council “Wherever you are, the Beloved will watch over you and sustain you, and you must feel encouraged to realize that your services, your faith and constancy, will in time be fully rewarde (was #74)

89. December 17. On this date in 1985, the UHJ cabled "General Assembly...For first time name (of the) precious faith (of) Bahá'u'lláh (was) mentioned (in the) highest most widely representative international forum yet established thus fulfilling long-cherished wish (of the) beloved Guardian." (was #73)

90. December 18. On this date in 1937, Moshe Sharon, the first Chair in Bahá'í Studies at Hebrew University, was born. Called "Israel's greatest Middle East scholar," he has repeatedly voiced extremist political views and maintains close connections with the Bahá'í Administrative Order. (was #72)

91. December 18. On this date in 1988, Borrah Kavelin died. Born in Russia to a distinguished Jewish family, in 1950 he was elected to the NSA of the United States, where he served for 13 years until his election to the inaugural UHJ, where he served from 1963 until his death in 1988. (was #71)

92. December 18. On this date in 1932, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated that "the Guardian wishes the Bahá'ís to bear in mind the repeated counsels of the Master that the friends should be on their guard when dealing with Easterners..." (was #70)

93. December 18. On this date in 1963, the UHJ wrote, "launching of the Nine Year Plan, the Universal House of Justice feels that it is timely to lay clearly before the Bahá'ís of all countries, the needs of the Fund at all its levels: local, national, continental and international." (was #69)

94. December 19. On this date in 1982, the UHJ addressed "why the circulation of Bahá'í News should be restricted to Bahá'ís," noting that "A Bahá'í news bulletin assumes that the reader is a Bahá'í ... in some cases, may give the wrong impression to those not familiar with the Bahá'í teachings." (was #68)

95. December 19. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi cabled "Faithless brother Hussein...recently further demeaned himself through marriage under obscure circumstances with lowborn Christian girl (in) Europe." He would later defend the use of the term "lowborn Christian girl." (was #67)

96. December 19. On this date in 1922, four days after his return to Palestine after "his eight months' withdrawal," Shoghi Effendi cabled the High Commissioner for Palestine in Jerusalem: "Pray accept my best wishes and kind regards on my return to Holy Land and resumption of my official duties." (was #66)

97. December 19. On this date in 1997, the UHJ wrote "while it is disconcerting that Covenant-breaker material is being disseminated on the Internet...An important role that the Internet can play in this regard is to make authentic Bahá'í literature, on the Covenant and on Bahá'í teachings generally... (was #65)

98. December 19. On this date in 1971, the UHJ wrote "After many years difficult negotiations erection obelisk marking site future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár Mount Carmel completed thus fulfilling project initiated beloved Guardian early years crusade." (was #64)

99. December 19. On this date in 1974, the UHJ wrote the NSA "regarding an atheist who agreed to the Bahá'í ceremony but since he did not believe in God did not wish to repeat the marriage verse" that "No Bahá'í marriage can be valid without the recitation of the prescribed verse by both parties." (was #63)

100. December 19. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the friends must observe the specific times for the remembrance of God, meditation, devotion and prayer, as it is highly unlikely, nay, rather impossible, that any enterprise should prosper and develop short of Divine bestowals...." (was #62)

101. December 20. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi announced the death of "Archbreaker of Covenant" in a cablegram later published in "Messages to America." (was #61)

102. December 20. On this date in 1849, William Miller died. He predicted that Christ would return to the Earth. William Sears' best-selling book, "Thief in the Night," ties the Bahá'í Faith to the fulfillment of this Christian prophecy. The Bahá'í movie "The Miller Prediction" rests on these events. (was #60)

103. December 20. On this date in 1948, "The Palestine Post" carried an article titled "Baha'i Foretold Israel's Future" stating "Shoghy eff. Rabbani, the 'Guardian' of the Bahai Cause, in a letter to Mr. Ben Gurion last week pledged the allegiance of the Bahais in Israel to the Government. Shoghi .." (was #59)

104. December 20. On this date in 2008, two of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in São Paulo, Brazil, and one in Kuching, Malaysia. (was #58)

105. December 20. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The title 'Hidden Words' was given by Bahá'u'lláh because there is a tradition in Islam, that Fatimih, Muhammad's daughter, grieved greatly over the Martyrdom of her son, and God sent Gabriel to speak encouraging words to her. These words..." (was #57)

106. December 20. On this date in 1928, Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney, a Bahá'í scholar and translator, died. The son of a prominent French Jewish family, he was converted to the Bahá'í Faith around 1900 by May Bolles (later Maxwell), the mother of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, who was resident in France. (was #56)

107. December 20. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi mentioned receipt of a postcard from St. Pierre and Miquelon. He was "happy to know that Mrs. Pawlowska is continuing her valuable pioneer service there, to which he attaches great importance." She was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for those islands (was #55)

108. December 21. On this date in 1927, Frank Leonard Wyss, an Australian Baha'i who served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia in the 1950's and became the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Cocos Islands, was born in Sydney, Australia. (was #54)

109. Baha'i History December 21. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote about "The transfer of the sacred remains of the brother and mother of our Lord and Master 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Mount Carmel." The letter also mentions 'Abdu'l-Bahá's brother Mirza Badí'ullah and Badí'ullah's daughter Sadhij Nassar. (was #53)

110. December 21. On this date in 1913, Frederick Laws, an American Bahá'í who became the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Basutoland, was born in Pineridge, Alabama. (was #52)

111. December 21. On this date in 1972, the UHJ referenced Shoghi Effendi as having said "Under no circumstances should Bahá'ís drink. It is so unambiguously forbidden in the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh that there is no excuse for them even touching it in the form of a toast, or in a burning plum pudding..." (was #51)

112. December 21. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "The original population of the United States was very dear to Abdu'l-Bahá's heart, and He foretold for the Indians a great future if they accepted and became enlightened by the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh." (was #50)

113. December 21. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The cardinal principle...obedience to the Government prevailing in any land in which we reside. We cannot, because, say, we do not personally like a totalitarian form of government, refuse to obey it when it becomes the ruling power." (was #49)

114. December 21. On this date in 1928, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West" regarding "the death of our talented and dearly-beloved friend, Mr. Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney." (was #48)

115. December 21. On this date in 1898, Dorothy Beecher Baker, later a Hand of the Cause of God, was born in Newark, New Jersey. An enthusiastic Bahá'í teacher, in 1954 she died in a plane crash while traveling to teach the Faith. (was #47)

116. December 21. On this date in 2006, the UHJ addressed a letter "to the Bahá'ís of Egypt" concerning their ability "to obtain officially issued identification cards." (was #46)

117. December 22. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi announced a loss of voting rights for those Bahá'ís remaining in freemasonry. Previously, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had permitted membership in freemason lodges and had even encouraged the Bahá'ís of Manchester to emulate the freemasons. (was #45)

118. December 22. On this date in 2002, the Bahá'í World News Service reported the Club of Budapest's honoring FUNDAEC with a Change the World -- Best Practice Award. FUNDAEC's current program director is Bita Correa, niece Farzam Arbab and daughter of Gustavo Correa. (was #44)

119. December 22. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote "There is no objection to leaving Bahá'í Literature in a public place as long as it is not overdone and does not savour of proselytizing." (was #43)

120. December 23. On this date in 1918, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent his secretary Ahmad Sohrab to the United States to deliver the "Tablets of the Divine Plan," a collection of 14 letters written between September 1916 and March 1917 by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Bahá'ís in the United States and Canada. (was #42)

121. December 23. On this date in 1979, the UHJ wrote an individual who raised "the question of the problem presented by the need to review scholarly works which may be the result of several years' research and detailed study of materials which may not be known to... those who must do the reviewing." (was #41)

122. December 24. On this date in 1944 Shoghi Effendi wrote "...in direct proportion to the turmoil and the tribulations which such a participation has engendered...heralded the establishment of the Administrative Order of the Faith as well as the first stage in the development of the Seven Year Plan. " (was #40)

123. December 24. On this date in 1986, the Lotus Temple was dedicated in India. It has won numerous architectural awards and been featured in hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles, becoming a global iconic Bahá'í symbol. (was #39)

124. December 24. On this date in 1951 Shoghi Effendi appointed his first contingent of living individuals to the station of Hands of the Cause of God. Hands had previously been appointed by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá as well as certain deceased individuals named posthumously by Shoghi Effendi. (was #38)

125. December 24. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote "There is no record in history, or in the teachings, of a Prophet similar in station to Bahá'u'lláh having lived 500,000 years ago. There will, however, be one similar to Him in greatness after the lapse of 500,000 years..." (was #37)

126. December 25. On this date in 1967, Charles William Dunning died. He had been named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for pioneering to the Orkney Islands. (was #36)

127. December 25. On this date in 1957, the Custodians cabled "REJOICE INFORM BELIEVERS COVENANT BREAKERS' HOUSE Bahji, COMPLETELY EFFACED FULFILLING LONG CHERISHED DESIRE BELOVED GUARDIAN WHO PLANNED PERSONALLY SUPERVISE THIS LAST PURIFICATION HARAM-I-AQDAS STOP SHARE MESSAGE ALL HANDS NATIONAL BODIES. (was #35)

128. December 25. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter, later published as "The Advent of Divine Justice" addressed "to the beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the United States and Canada," describing the role of America in establishing the Most Great Peace. (was #34)

129. December 25. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Let any one who feels the urge among the participators in this crusade ... direct in particular the attention, and win eventually the unqualified adherence, of the Negro, the Indian, the Eskimo, and Jewish races to his Faith." (was #33)

130. December 26. On this date in 1953, Minoo Fozdar (son of Shirin and Khodadad Fozdar, brother of John) arrived to the Nicobar Islands, for which he was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh. (was #32)

131. December 26. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi stated "References in the Bible to 'Mt. Paran' and 'Paraclete' refer to Muhammad's Revelation: Deuteronomy 33:2, Genesis 21:21, Numbers 12:16, Numbers 13:3. Genesis 17:20 refers to the twelve Imams and in the Revelation of St. John, chapter 11 ..." (was #31)

132. December 26. On this date in 1901, Agnes Baldwin Alexander arrived in Hawaii to open the islands to the Bahá'í Faith. (was #30)

133. December 26. On this date in 1924, a communication from the American Legation in Tehran reported on the publication of a falsified photograph of Reza Shah Pahlavi wearing the portrait and insignia of Bahá'u'lláh. (was #29)

134. December 26. On this date in 1926, Howard MacNutt, a Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, died. In 1912, as commanded by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, he repented before a group of New York Bahá'ís for violating the Covenant when he failed "to break all communication with Ibrahim Kheiralla and other Covenant-breakers." (was #28)

135. December 26. On this date in 2006, the Bahá'í World News Service reported on the Universal House of Justice's letter "to the Bahá'ís of Egypt" concerning their ability "to obtain officially issued identification cards." (was #27)

136. December 27. On this date in 1985, the Universal House of Justice asked "Who can doubt that we are now entering a period of unprecedented and unimaginable developments in the onward march of the Faith?" (was #26)

137. December 27. On this date in 2008, one of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. (was #25)

138. December 27. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The principle of the fireside meeting, which was established in order to permit and encourage the individual to teach in his own home, has been proven the most effective instrument for spreading the Faith..." (was #24)

139. December 27. On this date in 1909, Charles Mason Remey and Howard C. Struven, the first Bahá'ís to make a complete circuit of the world, reached Tokyo. Mason Remey would later become a Hand of the Cause, the president of the International Bahá'í Council, and a claimant to the office of Guardian. (was #23)

140. December 27. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of India giving reasons as to why the Kitab-i-Aqdas is not circulated amongst all the Bahá'ís or translated into their native languages. (was #22)

141. December 27. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of India "The Bab said that whenever 'He Whom God will make manifest' appears, accept Him. He never said don't accept Him until after the lapse of 1000 years....His Dispensation in a sense will last as long as Bahá'u'lláh's lasts." (was #21)

142. December 27. On this date in 1874, Mountfort Mills was born. A wealthy attorney, he served on the Bahá'í Temple Unity and the NSA of the US and Canada and represented the Faith in some important legal cases. He assisted 'Abdu'l-Baha during his time in New York City. (was #20)

143. December 28. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Every inquirer has to be approached from his own angle. Those who are essentially of the mystic type should first be given those teachings of the Cause which emphasize the nature and value of spiritual realities; while those who are ..." (was #19)

144. December 28. On this date in 1911, Hugh Chance, who served on the Universal House of Justice for 30 years from its inaugural election in 1963 until his retirement from that body in 1993, was born. (was #18)

145. December 28. On this date in 2005, the Bahá'í World News Service reported on the quinquennial meeting of the Continental Boards of Counsellors in Haifa. (was #17)

146. December 28. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi made some observations about the history of the early Church and the role of the Protestant Reformation, stating that "the primacy of Peter and his right to succession after Jesus have been established by the latter, though only orally and not ..." (was #16)

147. December 28. On this date in 1999, the Universal House of Justice announced to the Baha'i world that all elements of the laws dealing with obligatory prayer and fasting in the Kitab-i-Aqdas were henceforth applicable to all believers, including those in the West. (was #15)

148. December 28. On this date in 1980, the Universal House of Justice wrote the National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand in response to a letter from a spiritual assembly in New Zealand "posing questions which have arisen as a result of reading the book 'When We Grow Up' by Bahíyyih Nakhjavani." (was #14)

149. December 29. On this day in 2015 the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counselors outlining the Third Five Year Plan of the Second Epoch of the Formative Age of the Bahá'í Era. (was #13)

150. December 29. On this date in 1921, subsequent to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in Acre on November 28, Shoghi Effendi arrived in Palestine accompanied by Lady Blomfield and his eldest sister, Ruhangiz, who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker. (was #12)

151. December 29. On this date in 1979, Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir, a Hand of the Cause of God and Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, died of a heart attack at the age of 56 in Ecuador. (was #11)

152. December 29. On this date in 2008, an email to the Universal House of Justice asked "why such terms as “Alla´h-u-Abha´” and “Ya´ Baha´’u’l-Abha´” are used by Baha´’i´s rather than being translated into their native tongues." (was #10)

153. December 29. On this date in 1988, the UHJ wrote American Bahá'ís an important and often-quoted letter about rights and freedom of expression in the Bahá'í community, as contrasted with those in American civil society. (was #9)

154. December 30. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís his "feelings of great pride and deep sorrow that he read of the sufferings of the German believers." In 1934 he wrote the Nazis would respect "individual conscience in all matters pertaining to religion." (was #8)

155. December 30. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís about funding for the completion of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the West, titling it "The Seal of Complete Triumph". (was #7)

156. December 30. On this date in 2016, the Bahá’í World News Service reported on the Unity Foundation, "an organization started by a small group of Baha'is 25 years ago and inspired by the teachings of the Faith." The Administrator of Unity Foundation is Paul Arbab, son of Farzam Arbab. (was #6)

157. December 30. On this date in 1979 the Universal House of Justice sent a cablegram announcing the death of Hand of the Cause of God and Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir, who had died of a heart attack at the age of 56 in Ecuador. (was #5)

158. December 31. On this date in 1993, an individual asked the Universal House of Justice a question about a reference to the Guardianship in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. (was #4)

159. December 31. On this date in 1921, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís that "we, who follow in the Master's footsteps will ever bear in mind His sure and emphatic promise that your fatherland's present plight will erelong be turned into a material prosperity and a spiritual regeneration more ..." (was #3)

160. December 31. On this date in 1939, Sara Blomfield, an early leading member of the Bahá'í Faith in the British Isles, died. She had converted to the Bahá'í Faith in 1907, eight years after the death of her late husband Arthur Blomfield, through whose knighting in 1889 she became titled "Lady." (was #2)

161. December 31. On this date in 2005, an individual wrote the NSA of the U.S. regarding "its decision to cease to distribute books and other materials published, produced or marketed by Kalima´t Press" which it said "include material that is harmful to the interests of the Baha´'i´ Faith." (was #1)

December 1. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "that although Abdu'l-Bahá's station is not that of a Manifestation of God, nevertheless supplications may be addressed to Him. It is essential, however, that every believer should realize that while doing so he is directing his thoughts ..."

Original file: 0583.html (position #161)

December 1. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "that **although Abdu'l-Bahá's station is not that of a Manifestation of God, nevertheless supplications may be addressed to Him**. It is essential, however, that every believer should realize that while doing so he is directing his thoughts towards **the Master as an intermediary between him and the Manifestation**."

1621. Praying to Abdu'l-Bahá

"...he wishes me to explain that ***although Abdu'l-Bahá's station is not that of a Manifestation of God, nevertheless supplications may be addressed to Him****. It is essential, however, that every believer should realize that while doing so he is directing his thoughts towards* ***the Master as an intermediary between him and the Manifestation****, and not as the Source of Divine Revelation and spiritual guidance. Provided this distinction is clearly established there can be no harm or objection in addressing prayers to Abdu'l-Bahá."*

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, December 1, 1934: Bahá'í News, No. 89, February 1935, p. 4)

Comments

December 1. On this date in 1866, Marion Jack was born in Saint John, New Brunswick. An early Canadian Bahá'í, she converted to the Bahá'í Faith in Paris, and went on to teach English to the family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Akká for a short time. From 1931 until her death in 1954, she lived in Bulgaria.

Original file: 0582.html (position #160)

December 1. On this date in 1866, Marion Jack was born in Saint John, New Brunswick.

An early Canadian Bahá'í, she converted to the Bahá'í Faith in Paris, and went on to teach English to the family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Akká for a short time. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited London in 1911, he gave a talk at her home, in High Street, Kensington. In 1931, she pioneered to Bulgaria, where she lived until her death in 1954.

On May 24, 1954, Shoghi Effendi wrote the European Teaching Committee that "every Bahá'í, and most particularly those who have left their homes and gone to serve in foreign fields, should know of, and turn their gaze to, Marion Jack."

> *1939. Every Bahá'í, Especially Those Who Leave Their Homes to Serve in Foreign Lands, Should Turn Their Gaze to Marion Jack*
>
> *"For over thirty years, with an enlarged heart, and many other ailments, she remained at her post in Bulgaria. Never well-to-do, she often suffered actual poverty and want; want of heat, want of clothing, want of food, when her money failed to reach her because Bulgaria had come under the Soviet zone of influence. She was bombed, lost her possessions, she was evacuated, she lived in drafty, cold dormitories for many, many months in the country, she returned valiant to the capital of Bulgaria after the war, and continued, on foot, to carry out her teaching work.*
>
> *"The Guardian himself urged her strongly, when the war first began to threaten to cut her off in Bulgaria, to go to Switzerland. She was a Canadian subject, and ran great risks by remaining, not to mention the danger and the privations of war. However, she begged the Guardian not to insist, and assured him her one desire was to remain with her spiritual children. This she did, up to the last breath of her glorious life. Her tomb will become a national shrine, immensely loved and revered, as the Faith rises in stature in that country.*
>
> *"He thinks that every Bahá'í, and most particularly those who have left their homes and gone to serve in foreign fields, should know of, and turn their gaze to, Marion Jack."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the European Teaching Committee, May 24, 1954)*

Comments

December 1. On this date in 2005, the head of state of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, President Kessai Note, paid an official visit to the Baha'i World Centre with his wife, Mary Note. They were welcomed by UHJ member Peter Khan and his wife Janet Khan.

Original file: 0581.html (position #159)

December 1. On this date in 2005, the head of state of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, President Kessai Note, paid an official visit to the Baha'i World Centre with his wife, Mary Note. They were welcomed by Universal House of Justice member Peter Khan and his wife Janet Khan.

The Khans were the first Muslim family in Australia to convert to the Bahá'í Faith, doing so in 1948. On September 10, 1986, the patriarch Fazel "Frank" Khan died. Frank Khan would serve on the NSA of Australia, as would his children Joy Vohradsky and Peter Khan, who also served on the International Teaching Centre and Universal House of Justice.

Peter Khan was a prolific speaker. Some of his notable talks include a talk delivered in 2000 to New Zealand Bahá'ís about their reaction to Alison Marshall's excommunication, partially annotated here, which received a rebuttal by Juan Cole.

He is also known for an August 13, 2006, talk titled "Education, Scholarship, and Global Civilization."

> *There are those who are deeply concerned that if their young people embark on education in a secular setting it will weaken their faith; for example, they should not study psychology because it rests on the material concept of human nature and that will take them away from religion. From that perspective, they should not study philosophy, or economics, or sociology, or history, or what ever because it will weaken their religious faith. There are those, perhaps (not many of them, hopefully) who feel that religion contains all the knowledge one needs; as quoted in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, knowledge is a point that the ignorant have multiplied, and by pursuing education in a secular setting one is exposing oneself to this multiplication of ignorance. There are some who have an apocalyptic view of the imminence of catastrophe, which gives rise to the question "why bother with education when the whole rotten mess is going to blow up anyhow?" This creates a pressure on young people not to make a long-term commitment of an educational nature.*
>
> *Also, within the last few years, with the legitimate pressure for the core activities to be expanded and developed in the Five Year Plan, there are extremists who say that matters are so urgent at this time that we should abandon our long-term pursuits—educational or otherwise –because we have to get these 1500 intensive programs of growth. Their view is that nothing is more important than that, we should give up what ever else we are doing, just do this and maybe later (if there's time) you can go and get your education.*
>
> ...

Comments

December 1. On this date in 2011, Ian Semple, a former UHJ member from its establishment in 1963 until 2005, died in Switzerland. He had also served as a member of the NSA of the British Isles, of the Auxiliary Board for Propagation in Europe and of the International Baha'i Council.

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Ian Semple was born on December 2, 1928 in the North London suburb of New Barnet.

Semple studied at Pembroke College, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts in 1952 and Master of Arts in 1955 in the German and French languages and literature from Oxford University. He subsequently studied accounting in the City of London, qualifying as a Chartered Accountant in 1955 and becoming a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. From 1947 to 1949 Semple did his national service in the British Army, during which period he earned a commission in the Royal Corps of Signals. He became a member of the Bahá'í Faith in 1950 and served first on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles in 1956 as its secretary. He was an Auxiliary Board member in Europe from 1957 to 1961 with particular responsibility for the north of England, Scotland, Norway and Sweden. In 1961 he was elected to the International Bahá'í Council, and moved his residence to Haifa, Israel. In 1963 he was elected to the Universal House of Justice and served in that capacity until 2005 when he retired due to considerations of age.

Comments

December 2. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "A true and adequate knowledge of the Cause is, indeed, indispensable to every one who wishes to successfully teach the Message. The book of "Gleanings" gives the friends a splendid opportunity to acquire this necessary knowledge and ..."

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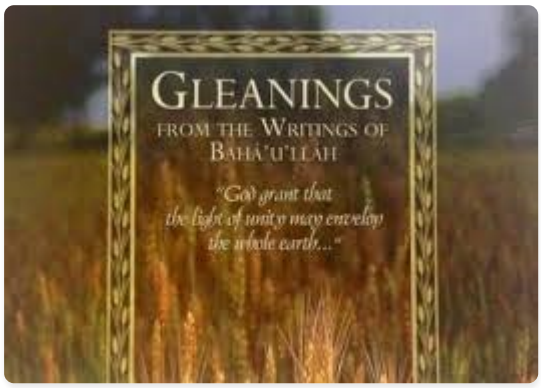
> *1943. A true and adequate knowledge of the Cause is, indeed, indispensable to*

> *every one who wishes to successfully teach the Message. The book of "Gleanings" gives the friends a splendid opportunity to acquire this necessary knowledge and understanding. It gives them, in addition, that inspiration and spiritual fervour which the reading of the Holy Words can alone impart.*
>
> *(From a letter dated 2 December 1935 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)*



Comments

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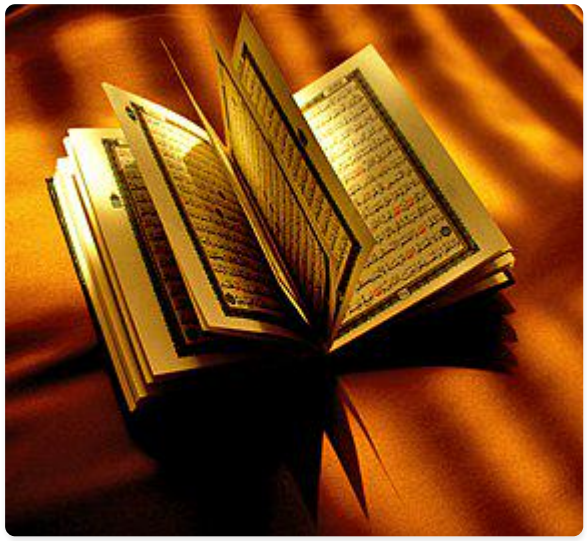
> *1904. Teaching of the Qur'an is Absolutely Indispensable*
>
> *"...the Guardian would certainly advise, and even urge* ***the friends to make a thorough study of the Qur'an as the knowledge of this Sacred Scripture is absolutely indispensable for every believer*** *who wishes to adequately understand and intelligently read the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. Although there are very few persons among our Western Bahá'ís who are capable of handling such a course in a scholarly way, yet, the mere lack of such competent teachers should*

> *encourage and stimulate the believers to get better acquainted with the Sacred Scriptures of Islam. In this way, there will gradually appear some distinguished Bahá'ís who will be so well versed in the teachings of Islam as to be able to guide the believers in their study of that religion."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, December 2, 1935: Centers of Bahá'í Learning, p. 9)*

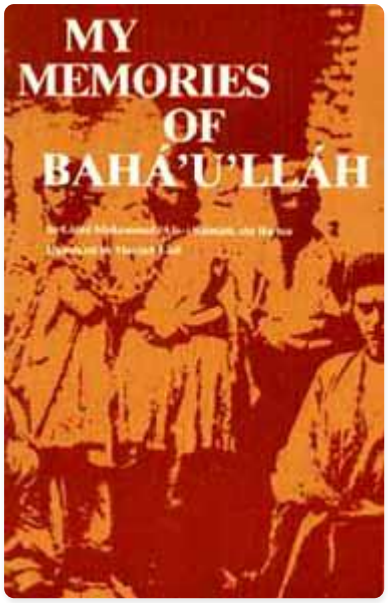


Comments

December 2. On this date in 1982, the UHJ wrote about the deletion of "objectionable passages" in Ustad Salmani's "My Memories of Bahá'u'lláh" noting it "untimely and unwise" to publish passages where believers refer to him as "You being God, Uncle" and other "unpleasant and unworthy" stories.

Original file: 0577.html (position #155)

December 2. On this date in 1982, the Universal House of Justice wrote (also here) Juan Cole about the deletion of "objectionable passages" in Ustad Salmani's *My Memories of Bahá'u'lláh* noting it "untimely and unwise" to publish passages where believers refer to him as "You being God, Uncle" and other "unpleasant and unworthy" stories.



Comments

December 2. On this date in 1957, the title to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, the Mansion of Bahji and all other buildings and lands that had been owned by the Covenant-breakers were passed to Israel's branch of the U.S. NSA.

Original file: 0576.html (position #154)

December 2. On this date in 1957, the title to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, the Mansion of Bahji and all other buildings and lands that had been owned by the Covenant-breakers were passed to Israel's branch of the U.S. NSA. Documentation of that transfer was signed by Leroy Ioas, and the signed document showed that his wife Sylvia had served as the witness, as that same transfer was made official.

Comments

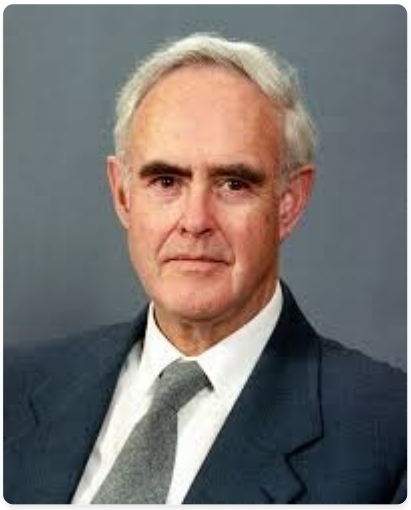
December 2. On this date in 1928, Ian Semple was born in New Barnett, England. A former UHJ member from its establishment in 1963 until 2005, he had also served as a member of the NSA of the British Isles, of the Auxiliary Board for Propagation in Europe and of the International Baha’i Council.

Original file: 0575.html (position #153)

December 2. On this date in 1928, Ian Semple was born in New Barnet, England. A former member of the Universal House of Justice from its establishment in 1963 until 2005, he had also served as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles, of the Auxiliary Board for Propagation in Europe and of the International Bahá'í Council.

Ian Semple was born on December 2, 1928 in the North London suburb of New Barnet.

Semple studied at Pembroke College, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts in 1952 and Master of Arts in 1955 in the German and French languages and literature from Oxford University. He subsequently studied accounting in the City of London, qualifying as a Chartered Accountant in 1955 and becoming a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. From 1947 to 1949 Semple did his national service in the British Army, during which period he earned a commission in the Royal Corps of Signals. He became a member of the Bahá'í Faith in 1950 and served first on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles in 1956 as its secretary. He was an Auxiliary Board member in Europe from 1957 to 1961 with particular responsibility for the north of England, Scotland, Norway and Sweden. In 1961 he was elected to the International Bahá'í Council, and moved his residence to Haifa, Israel. In 1963 he was elected to the Universal House of Justice and served in that capacity until 2005 when he retired due to considerations of age.



Comments

December 3. On this date in 1929, Shoghi Effendi wrote Queen Marie, "I have received through the intermediary of my dear Bahá'í sister Miss Martha Root, the autograph portrait of Your Majesty, ...I shall treasure this most excellent portrait... strikingly beautiful a photograph of a Queen..."

Original file: 0574.html (position #152)

December 3. On this date in 1929, Shoghi Effendi wrote (also here) Queen Marie, "I have received through the intermediary of my dear Bahá'í sister Miss Martha Root, the autograph portrait of Your Majesty, bearing in simple and moving terms, the message which Your Majesty has graciously been pleased to write in person. I shall treasure this most excellent portrait, and I assure you, that the Greatest Holy Leaf and the Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá share to the full my feelings of lively satisfaction at receiving so strikingly beautiful a photograph of a Queen whom we have learned to love and admire."

From Chapter 4 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's book *The Priceless Pearl*, titled "Martha Root and Queen Marie of Rumania"...

> *Haifa, Palestine,*
>
> *December 3, 1929*
>
> *Her Majesty*
>
> *The Dowager Queen Marie of Rumania*
>
> *Bucarest*
>
> *Your Majesty*
>
> *I have just received through the intermediary of my dear Bahá'í sister Miss Martha Root, the autograph portrait of Your Majesty, bearing in simple and moving terms, the message which Your Majesty has graciously been pleased to write in person. I shall treasure this most excellent portrait, and I assure you, that the Greatest Holy Leaf and the Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá share to the full my feelings of lively satisfaction at receiving so strikingly beautiful a photograph of a Queen whom we have learned to love and admire.*
>
> *I have followed during the past few years with profound sympathy the disturbed course of various happenings in your beloved country, which I feel must have caused you much pain and concern. But whatever the vicissitudes and perplexities which beset Your Majesty's earthly path, I am certain that even in your saddest hours, you have derived abundant sustenance and joy from the thought of having, through your glowing and historic utterances on the Bahá'í Faith as well as by your subsequent evidences of gracious solicitude for its welfare, brought abiding solace and strength to the multitude of its [page 113] faithful and long suffering adherents throughout the East. Yours surely, dearly beloved Queen, is the station ordained by Bahá'u'lláh in the realms beyond to which the strivings of no earthly power can ever hope to attain.*
>
> *I have immediately upon the publication of the second volume of the Bahá'í World, by the American Bahá'í Publishing Committee, forwarded directly to Bucarest, to the address of Your Majesty and that of Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana,*

> *copies of this most recent and comprehensive of Bahá'í publications. I will take the liberty of presenting in the course of the coming year the III Volume of this same publication which I trust will prove of interest to Your Majesty.*
>
> *May I, in closing, reiterate the expression of profound appreciation and joy which the Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Bahá'ís in every land universally feel for the powerful impetus which Your Majesty's outspoken and noble words have lent to the onward march of their beloved Faith.*
>
> *The Family also join me in extending to Your Majesty, as well as to Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana, a most cordial welcome should Your Majesty ever purpose to visit the Holy Land to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's home in Haifa as well as to those scenes rendered so hallowed and memorable by the heroic lives and deeds of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.*
>
> *Shoghi*

Although Bahá'ís frequently refer to Queen Marie of Romania as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá'í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter, Princess Ileana of Romania, disputes this claim:

> *"It is perfectly true that my mother, Queen Marie, did receive Miss Martha Root several times.....She came at the moment when we were undergoing very great family and national stress. At such a moment it was natural that we were receptive to any kind of spiritual message, but it is quite incorrect to say that my mother or any of us at any time contemplated becoming a member of the Baha'i faith."*

While the Administrative Order publicly eschews involvement in partisan politics, it has no reservations about routinely using its media outlets to proudly tout unelected royal leaders who are Bahá'í.

For example, on February 19, 1968, Malietoa Tanumafili II, one of Samoa's four paramount chiefs, became a Bahá'í.

Also, on April 24, 2017, the Bahá'í World News Service published a story about Djaouga Abdoulaye, who "became a Baha'i in the 1980s when the Faith initially came to Benin." The

news report states that he was enthroned High Chief in July of 2016, assuming a "position of moral and customary authority for the approximately 100,000 Fulani living in the area."

While rare and not promoted in the media outlets of the Administrative Order, there have been Bahá'ís who have been elected to office, such as Ted Livingston, who was the first Bahá'í in the United States to be the mayor of a city when he was elected Mayor of Cottonwood Falls, Kansas.

Comments

December 3. On this date in 1842, Phoebe Hearst was born. She was an early Bahá'í, a wealthy philanthropist, the wife of Senator George Hearst, and the mother of publisher William Randolph Hearst. She later became estranged from the Bahá'í Faith due to being extorted for money by other Bahá'ís.

Original file: 0573.html (position #151)

December 3. On this date in 1842, Phoebe Hearst was born. She was an early Bahá'í, a wealthy philanthropist, the wife of Senator George Hearst, and the mother of publisher William Randolph Hearst. She later became estranged from the Bahá'í Faith due to being extorted for money by other Bahá'ís.

Phoebe Hearst was born on December 3, 1842, and was raised a member of the Cumberland Presbyterian faith.

In 1898 she converted to the Bahá'í Faith, and undertook a Bahá'í pilgrimage to Palestine to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá with other American pilgrims, including Ibrahim George Kheiralla, Lua Getsinger and May Boles. It was during this trip, in Akka, that Kheiralla witnessed firsthand the conflict between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his brothers, leading him, upon his return to America in 1899, to form the "Society of Behaists" which would later be led by Shua Ullah Behai and to author a book, *Beha'u'llah*, wherein he states his belief that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was equal in rank to his brothers Mírzá Muhammad `Alí, Díyá'u'lláh, and Badi'u'lláh

Phoebe Hearst helped play a key role in the spread of the Bahá'í Faith in in the United States. In October 1912 she invited 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who was travelling throughout the United States, to stay at her home for a long weekend, even though at that time she had become estranged from the Bahá'í faith. During his stay 'Abdu'l-Bahá mentioned that anyone who tried to extort money or goods from others should not be considered a true Bahá'í. Mrs. Hearst had been a victim of such an incident, which had caused her estrangement from the religion.

Comments

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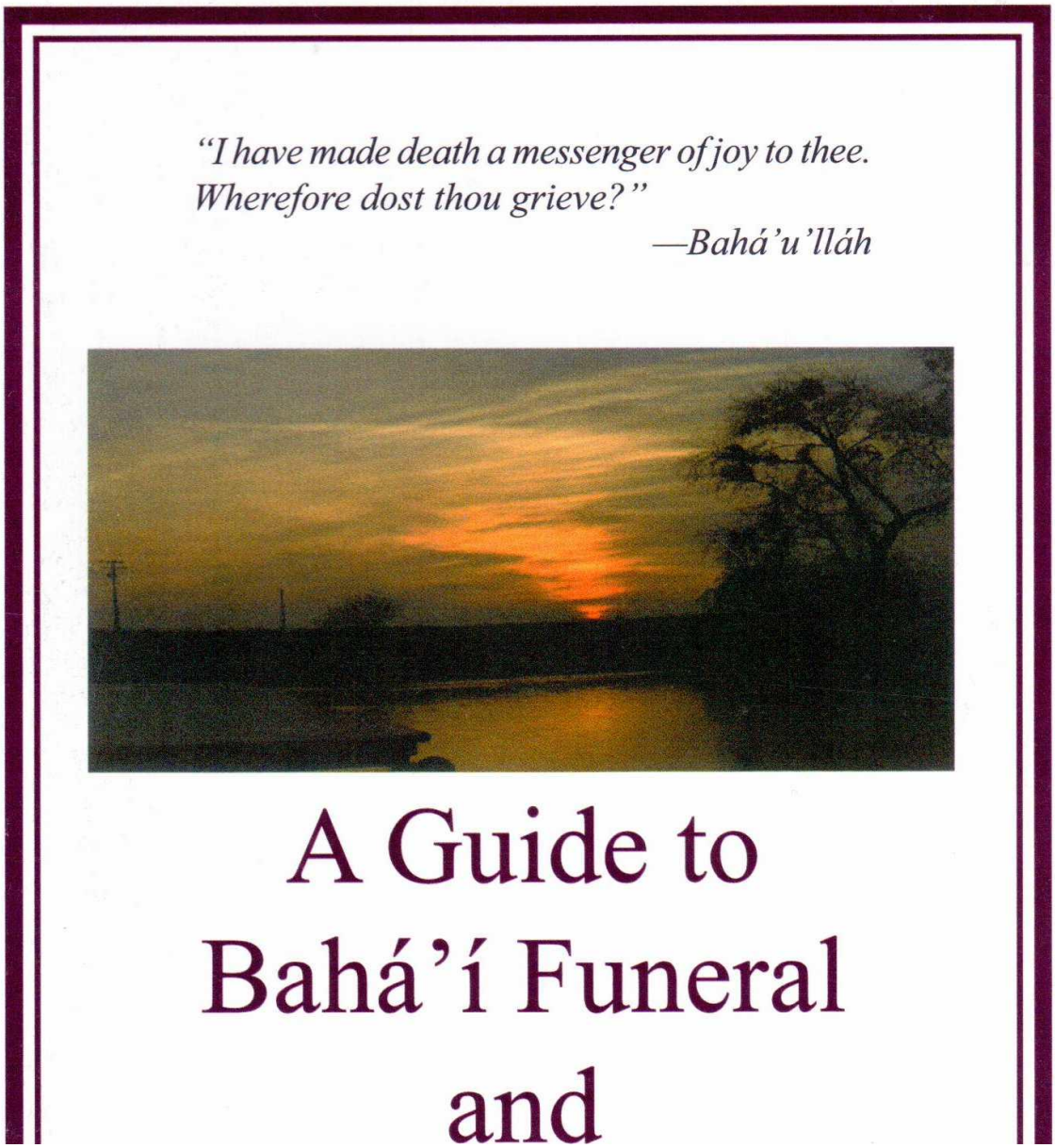
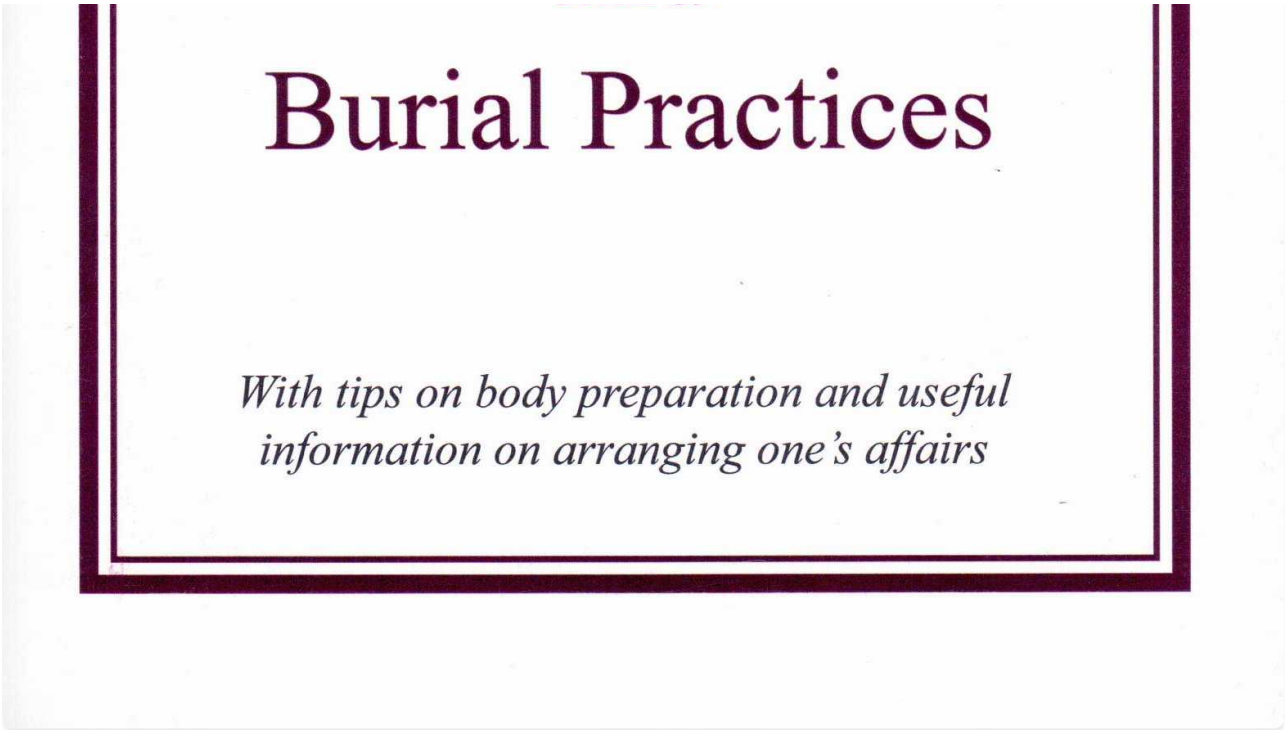
> *638. Burial Law Binding on Believers in the West*
>
> *"As to the law of burial, the Universal House of Justice suggests that you confine your statement to the following parts of this law which are now binding on the believers in the West:*
>
> *(1) That the body must be buried, not cremated.*

(2) That the Prayer for the Dead is to be recited for a believer of the age of 15 years or over. This, as you know, is the prayer which appears as number CLXVII in Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh.

(3) That the body not be transported more than an hour's journey from the place of death. The method of transport is not specified, but the journey must not take longer than one hour."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador, December 3, 1975)




Burial Practices
With tips on body preparation and useful information on arranging one's affairs

Comments

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Original file: 0571.html (position #149)

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> *TORCHBEARER OF WORLD CIVILIZATION*
>
> *My heart is thrilled with delight as I witness, in so many fields, and in such distant outposts, and despite such formidable difficulties, restrictions, obstacles and dangers, so many evidences of the solidarity, the valor, and the achievements of*

the American Bahá'í community. As the end of the First Century of the Bahá'í Era approaches, as the shadows descending upon and enveloping mankind steadily and remorselessly deepen, this community, which can almost be regarded as ***the solitary champion of the Faith in the Western World,*** *is increasingly evincing and demonstrating its capacity, its worth, and ability as* ***the torchbearer of the New, the World Civilization which is destined to supplant in the fulness of time the present one****. And more particularly in the virgin and far-flung territories of Latin America, it has in recent months, abundantly given visible evidence of its merits and competence to shoulder the immense responsibilities which the carrying of the sacred Fire to all the Republics of the Western Hemisphere must necessarily entail.*

Through these initial steps, which, in pursuance of the Plan conceived by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, this community has taken, through the settlement in each of these sovereign states of the New World of American Bahá'í pioneers, through the formation of Bahá'í groups and the establishment of two Assemblies in Buenos Aires and Bahia, the American National Assembly, as well as its Inter-America Committee, and all subsidiary agencies, no less than the individual members of the North American Bahá'í community who have sacrificed and are still sacrificing so much in their support of this Divine and momentous Plan, have earned the unqualified admiration and the undying gratitude of sister Assemblies and fellow-workers throughout the Bahá'í World.

Their work, however, is only beginning. The dispatch of pioneers, the provision of adequate means for their support, their settlement and initiation of Bahá'í activities in these far-off lands, however strenuous and meritorious, are insufficient if the Plan is to evolve harmoniously and yield promptly its destined fruit. The extension by the Parent Assembly--the immediate source from which this vast system with all its ramifications is now proceeding--of the necessary support, guidance, recognition and material assistance to enable these newly-fledged groups and Assemblies to function in strict accordance with both the spiritual and administrative principles of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, would seem as essential and urgent as the preliminary task already achieved. To nurse these tender plants of the Vineyard of God, to foster their growth, to direct their development, to accord them the necessary recognition, to help resolve their problems, to familiarize them with gentleness, patience and fidelity with the processes of the Administrative Order and thus enable them to assume independently the conduct of future local and national Bahá'í activities, would bring the plan to swift and full fruition and

> *would add fresh laurels to the crown of immortal glory already won by a community that holds in these days of dark and dire calamities, valiantly and almost alone, the Fort of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Fortified by these reflections, let them gird up their loins for still mightier exertions and more brilliant victories.*
>
> *December 3, 1940*

Comments

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Original file: 0570.html (position #148)

December 3. On this date in 1982, Hand of the Cause of God and Custodian Paul Haney died after sustaining injuries in a car accident in Haifa.

He was born on August 20, 1909 to Bahá'í parents.

In 1946 he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada. He represented the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States at the formation of Canada's independent National Spiritual Assembly in 1948.

He was named chairman of the NSA of the United States in 1950 and continued to serve in that capacity until 1957.
After the passing of Shoghi Effendi on November 4, 1957 Paul Haney was elected to be a Custodian of the Holy Land, and he gave up his job in the United States to serve the Faith in this capacity. He lived in the Holy Land, but he also traveled to represent the Hands of the Cause at various national conventions, including the First World Bahá'í Congress in London's Albert Hall in 1963.

When the Universal House of Justice was elected, Paul was one of five Hands of the Cause elected as advisers. He also represented the Bahá'í World Center at diplomatic functions in Jerusalem.

He participated in the founding of the Continental Board of Counselors and the

International Teaching Center in 1973 . He attended the four International Conventions that took place during his life, and chaired the opening session of the 1968 Convention. He passed away in Haifa on December 3, 1982 after sustaining injuries in a car accident.

Comments

December 4. On this date in 1963, the UHJ wrote an NSA that "the law requiring consent of parents before marriage...is a law of great importance affecting the very foundation of human society."

Original file: 0569.html (position #147)

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> *We gain the impression from Mr. .....'s letter that he looks upon the law requiring consent of parents before marriage as a mere administrative regulation, and does not realize that this is a law of great importance affecting the very foundation of human society. Moreover, he seems not to appreciate that in the Bahá'í Faith the spiritual and administrative aspects are complementary and that the social laws of the Faith are as binding as the purely spiritual ones.*
>
> *4 December 1963 to a National Spiritual Assembly.*

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According to Harry Charles Luke, an official in the British Colonial Office who served as

assistant Governor of Jerusalem,

> *Sir 'Abbas Effendi 'Abdu'l Baha had travelled extensively in Europe and America to expound his doctrines, and on the 4th December, 1919, was created by King George V a K.B.E. for valuable services rendered to the British Government in the early days of the Occupation.*

On April 27, 1920, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was ceremonially knighted, an event which was prominently reported in the Bahá'í periodical *Star of the West*.

> *THE following beautiful description of this event was written by Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi who was at that time in Haifa: "Among the kings and governments of the world who have become convinced that Abdul Bahá was the well-wisher and the lover of mankind are King George and his government. The King sent a medal to Abdul Bahá with the title, "Sir", thus making him a member of his household. On the 27th of April, 1920, the Governor and high officials of Haifa, Palestine presented in a beautiful garden* ***a most wonderful celebration for the knighting of Abdul Baha.*** *Bahai pilgrims from Persia, America and all parts of the world were present. Mohammedan, Christian, Jewish leaders, clergymen, notables and local officials from Haifa, Acca and other towns attended. A tent was pitched in the center of the garden.* ***English troops stood on both sides, from the gate of the garden to the center where Abdul Bahá was seated.*** *The military music added wonderful melody to the rustling leaves of the beautiful trees. The breezes of the spring on that sunny afternoon imparted a remarkable vigor to the physical body just as the presence of Abdul Baha strengthened the souls. The Governor stood behind Abdul Bahá and, after a short speech, interpreted by Mr. Wadie Bistani, presented the medal. Then Abdul Baha, rising from his seat, gave a brief talk and a prayer for the British government.*

BREAK

There have been many people who, for various reasons, have refused British honours. Included among them are scientists like Francis Crick and Michael Faraday, musicians like David Bowie, and even devout British imperialists like T.E. Lawrence and Rudyard Kipling.

Benjamin Zephaniah refused his honour, stating "I get angry when I hear the word 'empire'; it reminds me of slavery, it reminds me of thousands of years of brutality, it reminds me of how my foremothers were raped and my forefathers brutalised."

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'Abdu'l-Bahá held none of these objections and accepted his knighthood with great pomp and ceremony, in "a most wonderful celebration"

The Chosen Highway chronicles in some detail how 'Abdu'l-Bahá aided the British against the Ottomans during World War I. For example...

> *We learned that when the British marched into Haifa there was some difficulty about the commissariat. The officer in command went to consult the Master.*
>
> *"I have corn," was the reply.*
>
> *"But for the army?" said the astonished soldier.*
>
> *"I have corn for the British Army," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá.*
>
> *He truly walked the Mystic way with practical feet. [footnote: Lady Blomfield often recounted how the corn pits proved a safe hiding-place for the corn, during the occupation of the Turkish army. -Ed.]*

and later...

> *The British Government, with its usual gesture of appreciating a heroic act, conferred a knighthood upon 'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbas, Who accepted this honour as a courteous gift "from a just king."*

> *The dignitaries of the British crown from Jerusalem were gathered in Haifa, eager to do honour to the Master, Whom every one had come to love and reverence for His life of unselfish service. An imposing motor-car had been sent to bring 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the ceremony. The Master, however, could not be found. People were sent in every direction to look for Him, when suddenly from an unexpected side He appeared, alone, walking His kingly walk, with that simplicity of greatness which always enfolded Him.*
>
> *The faithful servant, Isfandiyar, whose joy it had been for many years to drive the Master on errands of mercy, stood sadly looking on at the elegant motor-car which awaited the honoured guest.*
>
> *"No longer am I needed."*
>
> *At a sign from Him, Who knew the sorrow, old Isfandiyar rushed off to harness the horse, and brought the carriage out at the lower gate, whence 'Abdu'l-Bahá was driven to a side entrance of the garden of the Governorate of Phoenicia.*
>
> *So Isfandiyar was needed and happy.*

Further collaboration is documented in *Chapter V: Danger to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, His Family and Friends, and How it was Averted*

On March 11, 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter later published as *The Unfolding of World Civilization,* a document included in the book titled *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*

Within the *The Unfolding of World Civilization* are sections, such as one entitled *Collapse of Islam*, in which Shoghi Effendi summarizes late Ottoman and early Turkish Republican history in these terms...

> *The murder of that arrogant despot in the year 1876; the Russo-Turkish conflict that soon followed in its wake; the wars of liberation which succeeded it; the rise of the Young Turk movement; the Turkish Revolution of 1909 that precipitated the downfall of 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd; the Balkan wars with their calamitous consequences;* ***the liberation of Palestine*** *enshrining within its bosom the cities of 'Akká and Haifa, the world center of an emancipated Faith;* ***the further dismemberment decreed by the Treaty of Versailles****; the abolition of the Sultanate and the downfall of the House of Uthmán; the extinction of the*

> *Caliphate; the disestablishment of the State Religion; the annulment of the Sharí'ah Law and the promulgation of a universal Civil Code; the suppression of various orders, beliefs, traditions and ceremonials believed to be inextricably interwoven with the fabric of the Muslim Faith—these followed with an ease and swiftness that no man had dared envisage. In these devastating blows, administered by friend and foe alike, by Christian nations and professing Muslims,* ***every follower of the persecuted Faith of Bahá'u'lláh recognized evidences of the directing Hand of the departed Founder of his religion, Who, from the invisible Realm, was unloosing a flood of well-deserved calamities upon a rebellious religion and nation.*** *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, page 175*

Three thoughts from this passage:

1) Shoghi Effendi considers the British seizure of Palestine a "liberation." By the time *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* was published in 1938, the British had permitted the immigration of hundreds of thousands of Jewish settlers to Palestine, and in 1937 the Peel Commission proposed a partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab sectors. The proposal was rejected by both the Arab and Jewish leadership. It is not mere conspiratorial inklings that lead detractors to consider the Bahá'í Faith to have ties to Zionism or British and Russian Imperialism.

2) Shoghi Effendi refers to "the further dismemberment decreed by the Treaty of Versailles" of the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of Versailles was signed between Germany and some of the Allied nations, and it did not pertain to the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire would cease hostilities with Allies through the Armistice of Mudros, and Treaty of Sevres that was signed at the end of World War I was never ratified by the Ottoman Parliament in Istanbul. The nascent Republic of Turkey would later sign the Treaty of Lausanne with the Allies.

3) Shoghi Effendi describes the suffering of Ottoman subjects in World War I to have been "well-deserved calamities" unloosed by the "directing Hand" of Bahá'u'lláh. One wonders how anyone can equate Bahá'u'lláh's exile, where he was still allowed to lead his religious community and publicly declare himself *Him whom God shall make manifest*, with the suffering of World War I

In the following section, *Deterioration of Christian Institutions*, Shoghi Effendi similarly targets Christianity...

> *Time alone can reveal the nature of the rôle which the institutions directly associated with the Christian Faith are destined to assume in this, the Formative Period of the Bahá'í Era, this dark age of transition through which humanity as a whole is passing. Such events as have already transpired, however, are of such a nature as can indicate the direction in which these institutions are moving. We can, in some degree, appraise the probable effect which the forces operating both within the Bahá'í Faith and outside it will exert upon them.*

In the section titled *Community of the Most Great Name*, Shoghi Effendi lauds the Bahá'ís...

> *Conscious of their high calling, confident in the society-building power which their Faith possesses, they press forward, undeterred and undismayed, in their efforts to fashion and perfect the necessary instruments wherein the embryonic* ***World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*** *can mature and develop. It is this building process, slow and unobtrusive, to which the life of the world-wide Bahá'í Community is wholly consecrated, that* ***constitutes the one hope of a stricken society.*** *For this process is actuated by the generating influence of God's changeless Purpose, and is evolving within the framework of the Administrative Order of His Faith.*
>
> *In a world the structure of whose political and social institutions is impaired, whose vision is befogged, whose conscience is bewildered, whose religious systems have become anemic and lost their virtue,* ***this healing Agency, this leavening Power, this cementing Force, intensely alive and all-pervasive, has been taking shape, is crystallizing into institutions, is mobilizing its forces, and is preparing for the spiritual conquest and the complete redemption of mankind.*** *Though the society which incarnates its ideals be small, and its direct and tangible benefits as yet inconsiderable, yet the potentialities with which it has been endowed, and through which it is destined to regenerate the individual and rebuild a broken world, are incalculable.*

Shoghi Effendi continues in *Divine Retribution*...

> *Ominous indeed is the voice of Bahá'u'lláh that rings through these prophetic words: "O ye peoples of the world! Know, verily, that an unforeseen calamity followeth you, and grievous retribution awaiteth you. Think not that which ye have committed hath been effaced in My sight." And again: "We have a fixed time for you, O peoples. If ye fail, at the appointed hour, to turn towards God, He, verily, will lay violent hold on you, and will cause grievous afflictions to assail you from every direction. How severe, indeed, is the chastisement with which your Lord will then chastise you!"*

He concludes with *World Unity the Goal...*

> *A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation—such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.*
>
> *...*
>
> *What more fitting conclusion to this theme than these words of Bahá'u'lláh, written in anticipation of the golden age of His Faith—the age in which the face of the earth, from pole to pole, will mirror the ineffable splendors of the Abhá Paradise? "This is the Day whereon naught can be seen except the splendors of the Light that shineth from the face of thy Lord, the Gracious, the Most Bountiful. Verily, We have caused every soul to expire by virtue of Our irresistible and all-subduing sovereignty. We have then called into being a new creation, as a token of Our grace unto men. I am, verily, the All-Bountiful, the Ancient of Days. This is the Day whereon the unseen world crieth out: 'Great is thy blessedness, O earth, for thou hast been made the foot-stool of thy God, and been chosen as the seat of His mighty throne!' The realm of glory exclaimeth: 'Would that my life could be sacrificed for thee, for He Who is the Beloved of the All-Merciful hath established His sovereignty upon thee, through the power of His name that hath been promised unto all things, whether of the past or of the future.'"*

> *Shoghi.*
>
> *Haifa, Palestine,*
>
> *March 11, 1936.*

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Original file: 0566.html (position #144)

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Original file: 0565.html (position #143)

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> *Time alone can reveal the nature of the rôle which the institutions directly associated with the Christian Faith are destined to assume in this, the Formative Period of the Bahá'í Era, this dark age of transition through which humanity as a whole is passing. Such events as have already transpired, however, are of such a nature as can indicate the direction in which these institutions are moving. We can, in some degree, appraise the probable effect which the forces operating both within the Bahá'í Faith and outside it will exert upon them.*

In the section titled *Community of the Most Great Name*, Shoghi Effendi lauds the Bahá'ís...

> *Conscious of their high calling, confident in the society-building power which their Faith possesses, they press forward, undeterred and undismayed, in their efforts to fashion and perfect the necessary instruments wherein the embryonic* ***World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*** *can mature and develop. It is this building process, slow and unobtrusive, to which the life of the world-wide Bahá'í Community is wholly consecrated, that* ***constitutes the one hope of a stricken society.*** *For this process is actuated by the generating influence of God's changeless Purpose, and is evolving within the framework of the Administrative Order of His Faith.*
>
> *In a world the structure of whose political and social institutions is impaired, whose vision is befogged, whose conscience is bewildered, whose religious systems have become anemic and lost their virtue,* ***this healing Agency, this leavening Power, this cementing Force, intensely alive and all-pervasive, has been taking shape, is crystallizing into institutions, is mobilizing its forces, and is preparing for the spiritual conquest and the complete redemption of mankind.*** *Though the society which incarnates its ideals be small, and its direct and tangible benefits as yet inconsiderable, yet the potentialities with which it has been endowed, and through which it is destined to regenerate the individual and rebuild a broken world, are incalculable.*

Shoghi Effendi continues in *Divine Retribution*...

> *Ominous indeed is the voice of Bahá'u'lláh that rings through these prophetic words: "O ye peoples of the world! Know, verily, that an unforeseen calamity followeth you, and grievous retribution awaiteth you. Think not that which ye have committed hath been effaced in My sight." And again: "We have a fixed time for you, O peoples. If ye fail, at the appointed hour, to turn towards God, He, verily, will lay violent hold on you, and will cause grievous afflictions to assail you from every direction. How severe, indeed, is the chastisement with which your Lord will then chastise you!"*

He concludes with *World Unity the Goal...*

> *A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation—such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.*
>
> *...*
>
> *What more fitting conclusion to this theme than these words of Bahá'u'lláh, written in anticipation of the golden age of His Faith—the age in which the face of the earth, from pole to pole, will mirror the ineffable splendors of the Abhá Paradise? "This is the Day whereon naught can be seen except the splendors of the Light that shineth from the face of thy Lord, the Gracious, the Most Bountiful. Verily, We have caused every soul to expire by virtue of Our irresistible and all-subduing sovereignty. We have then called into being a new creation, as a token of Our grace unto men. I am, verily, the All-Bountiful, the Ancient of Days. This is the Day whereon the unseen world crieth out: 'Great is thy blessedness, O earth, for thou hast been made the foot-stool of thy God, and been chosen as the seat of His mighty throne!' The realm of glory exclaimeth: 'Would that my life could be sacrificed for thee, for He Who is the Beloved of the All-Merciful hath established His sovereignty upon thee, through the power of His name that hath been promised unto all things, whether of the past or of the future.'"*

Shoghi.

Haifa, Palestine,

March 11, 1936.

Comments

December 4. On this date in 1954, Leroy Ioas wrote "The beloved Guardian has directed me to write you... that the Israel Branch of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada was to be established, and land on Mount Carmel registered in your name..."

Original file: 0563.html (position #141)

December 4. On this date in 1954, Leroy Ioas wrote "The beloved Guardian has directed me to write you in connection with a recent communication you submitted to him, in which you stated that you were pleased to note that the Israel Branch of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada was to be established, and land on Mount Carmel registered in your name. In the Guardian's Ridván Message of April, 1954, you will note he has advised that the Israel Branch of the Bahá'ís of Canada was formed. The actual date of the formation was November 20, 1953. The land of Mount Carmel, which the Guardian had instructed be registered in the name of the Israel Branch of the Canadian Assembly was transferred to the title of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, Israel

Branch, on October 1, 1954. I am attaching hereto, for preservation in your files, the title deed covering this particular piece of land, which is Parcel No. 304, Block 10811, Mount Carmel, Haifa."

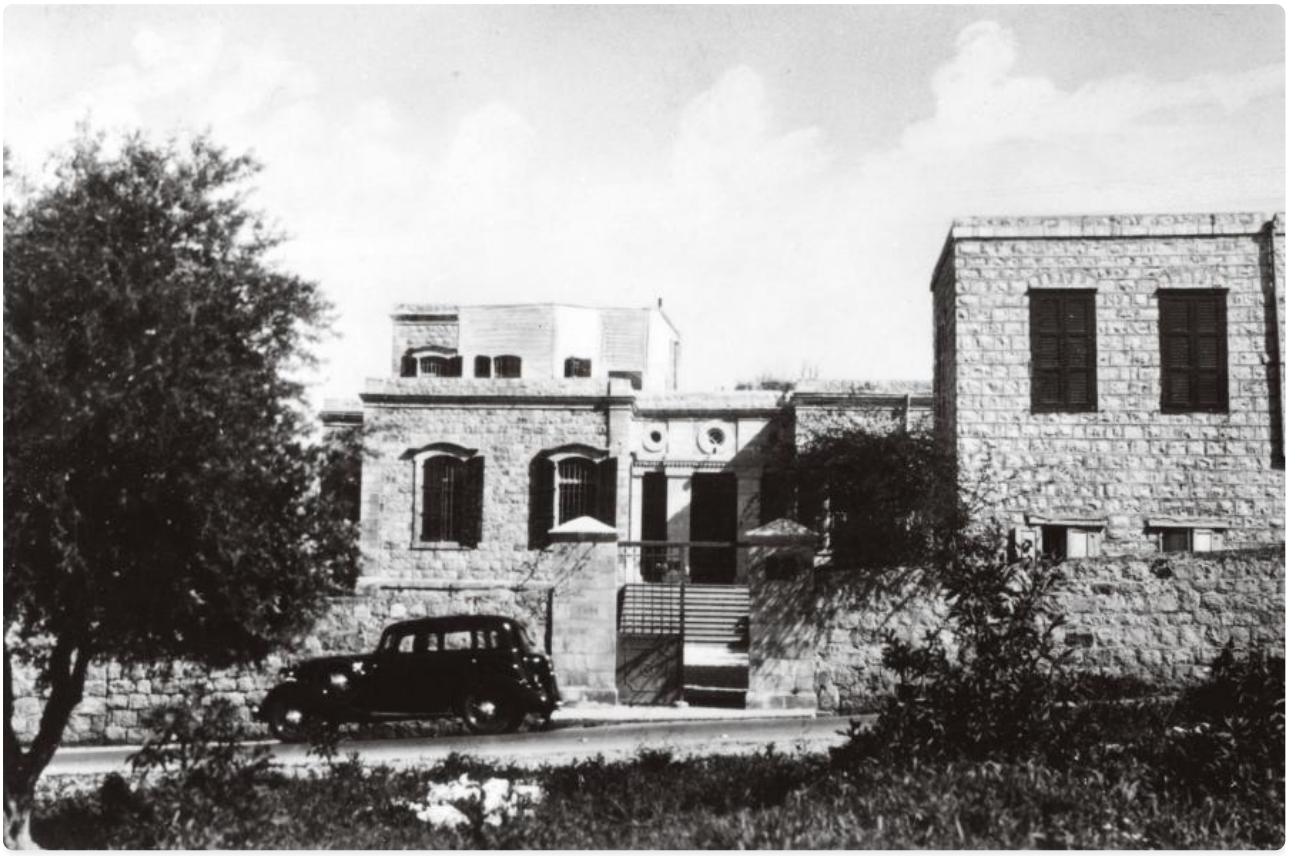
> *December 4, 1954.*
>
> *LAND TITLE TRANSFERRED TO ISRAEL BRANCH*
>
> *National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada.*
>
> *The beloved Guardian has directed me to write you in connection with a recent communication you submitted to him, in which you stated that you were pleased to note that the Israel Branch of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada was to be established, and land on Mount Carmel registered in your name.*
>
> *In the Guardian's Ridván Message of April, 1954, you will note he has advised that the Israel Branch of the Bahá'ís of Canada was formed. The actual date of the formation was November 20, 1953.*
>
> *The land of Mount Carmel, which the Guardian had instructed be registered in the name of the Israel Branch of the Canadian Assembly was transferred to the title of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, Israel Branch, on October 1, 1954.*
>
> *I am attaching hereto, for preservation in your files, the title deed covering this particular piece of land, which is Parcel No. 304, Block 10811, Mount Carmel, Haifa.*
>
> *With loving Bahá'í greetings, I am*
>
> *Faithfully yours,*
>
> *LEROY IOAS,*
>
> *Assistant Secretary*

Comments

December 5. On this date in 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá returned to Haifa, concluding his journeys to the West. On this date in 2013, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter to the Bahá’ís of the World commemorating this event, noting ..."

Original file: 0562.html (position #140)

December 5. On this date in 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá returned to Haifa, concluding his journeys to the West. On this date in 2013, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter to the Bahá’ís of the World commemorating this event, noting "**Given all this, we have no hesitation in recognizing that what these developments reveal is an advance in the process of entry by troops of a kind not experienced heretofore**...To this end do all your efforts tend."



Comments

December 5. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The people of the world not only need the laws and principles of the Bahá'í Faith--they desperately need to see the love that is engendered by it in the hearts of its followers..."

Original file: 0561.html (position #139)

December 5. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The people of the world not only need the laws and principles of the Bahá'í Faith--they desperately need to see the love that is engendered by it in the hearts of its followers, and to partake of that atmosphere of tolerance, understanding, forbearance and active kindness which should be the hall-mark of a Bahá'í Community."

> *1345. The People of the World Need to See the Love Engendered by the Faith in the Hearts of the Believers*
>
> *"The people of the world not only need the laws and principles of the Bahá'í Faith--they desperately need to see the love that is engendered by it in the hearts of its followers, and to partake of that atmosphere of tolerance, understanding,*

forbearance and active kindness which should be the hall-mark of a Bahá'í Community."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 5, 1942)

Comments

December 6. On this date in 1965, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States titled "Reasons for Delay in Translating and Publishing the Kitab-i-Aqdas."

Original file: 0560.html (position #138)

December 6. On this date in 1965, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States titled "Reasons for Delay in Translating and Publishing the Kitab-i-Aqdas.". William Miller translated the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, which was published by the Royal Asiatic Society in 1961, three decades before the Bahá'í Administration's officially-sanctioned translation in 1992, by which time other translations, such as one by the Royal Asiatic Society, were becoming increasingly available through dissemination via the internet. My personal opinion is that the material in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is so objectionable that the Bahá'í authorities wished to shield Western believers from its contents, as they do from Bahá'u'lláh's other works by not providing translations.

> *Reasons for Delay in Translating and Publishing the Kitab-i-Aqdas*
>
> *6 DECEMBER 1965*
>
> *The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States*

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

We have received a number of inquiries as to the translation and publication of the Kitab-i-Aqdas from friends who are unable to read it in its original form. We feel the following extract from a letter written on behalf of the beloved Guardian by his secretary dated December 27, 1941, addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma clarifies this question:

The reason it [the Kitab-i-Aqdas] is not circulated amongst all the Bahá'ís is, first, because the Cause is not yet ready or sufficiently matured to put all the provisions of the Aqdas into effect and, second, because it is a book which requires to be supplemented by detailed explanations and to be translated into other languages by a competent body of experts.

The provisions of the Aqdas are gradually, according to the progress of the Cause, being put into effect already, both in the East and the West

As is well known, the beloved Guardian has already given in God Passes By, pp. 24-15, a summary of the contents of this Most Holy Book, and included the codification of all the laws of the Kitab-i-Aqdas as one of the objectives of the Ten Year Crusade. It is the intention of the Universal House of Justice to achieve this objective by publishing a synopsis and codification of these laws during the current Nine Year Plan. Much of the Kitab-i-Aqdas has already been translated by the beloved

Guardian and has been given to the friends in the West, although not designated, in every case, as coming from the Most Holy Book., We give you below a list of such references for your guidance:

Gleanings from the Writings Sections XXXVII, LVI, LXX, of Bahá'u'lláh =I, XCVIII, CV, CIV, CLIX, and CLXV The Promised Day Is Come pp. 26 (1st para.), 36-37 (until the end Of 2nd para.), 40 (2nd para.), and 84-85 (until the end of 1st para.)

In 1973, the last year of the Nine Year Plan, the Universal House of Justice published A Synopsis and Codification of the Kitab-i-Aqdas. The volume includes all of the extracts in the list of references that follows. The Bahá'í World Center published a copiously annotated English translation of the Kitab-i-Aqdas and related texts in 1992.

The Challenging Requirements pp. 16-17 of the Present Hour 2 (until the end of 1st

para.) Bahá'í Administration p. 21 (1st para.) The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh P. 134 (2nd para.) The Bahá'í Community (1963 edition) P. 4 (2nd & 3rd paras) Star of the West, Vol. XIV Pp. 112-14

The two reasons given by the Guardian in the extract of the letter quoted above need further amplification:

1. *As regards the first reason, regarding the timeliness of putting into effect all the provisions of the Kitab-i-Aqdas, it must be borne in mind that the beloved Guardian further stated:*

... the Laws revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in the Aqdas are, whenever practicable and not in direct conflict with the Civil Law of the land, absolutely binding on every believer or Bahá'í institution whether in the East or in the West. Certain laws, such as fasting, obligatory prayers, the consent of the parents before marriage, avoidance of alcoholic drinks, monogamy, should be regarded by all believers as universally and vitally applicable at the present time. Others have been formulated in anticipation of a state of society destined to emerge from the chaotic conditions that prevail today. When the Aqdas is published this matter will be further explained and elucidated. What has not been formulated in the Aqdas, in addition to matters of detail and of secondary importance arising out of the application of the Laws already formulated by Bahá'u'lláh, will have to be enacted by the Universal House of Justice.... (Bahá'í News, October 1935)

The Guardian has further written:

It should be noted in this connection that this Administrative Order is fundamentally different from anything that any Prophet has previously established, inasmuch as Bahá'u'lláh has Himself revealed its principles, established its institutions, appointed the person to interpret His Word and conferred the necessary authority on the body designed to supplement and apply His legislative ordinances. Therein lies the secret of its strength, its fundamental distinction, and the guarantee against disintegration and schism. . . . (The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 145)

This message of Shoghi Effendi was later published in CF, pp. 4-38; the passage from the Kit6b-i-Aqdas appears on pp. 18-19 (see also PB, p. 63).

1. *As to the second reason given by the beloved Guardian in the extract referred to above, it must be noted that the supplementary material to go*

with the publication of the laws of the Kitab-i-Aqdas may well include the following items, all of which require careful research and translation:

a. The Annex to the Kitab-i-Aqdas, the Questions and Answers. (God Passes By, p. 219)

b. Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh in "elaboration and elucidation of some of the laws He [Bahá'u'lláh] had already laid down." (God Passes By, p. 216)

c. Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh establishing 'subsidiary ordinances designed to supplement the provisions of His Most Holy Book." (God Passes By, p. 216)

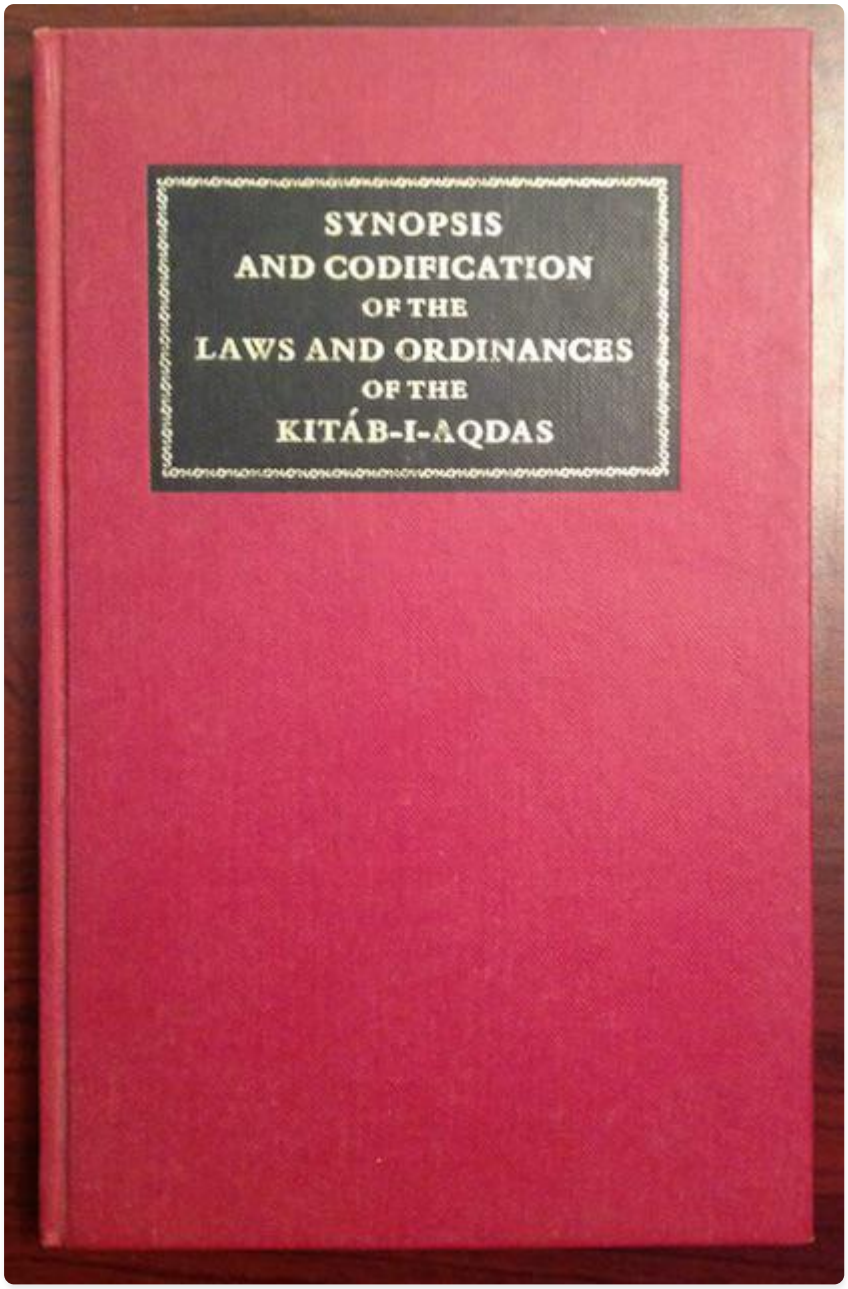
d. The Letters and Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi in interpretation of the laws and ordinances of the Kitab-i-Aqdas.

e. Other explanations and footnotes that may be required in elucidation of the provisions of that Book.

We hope the foregoing will clarify the matter for the friends

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE


SYNOPSIS
AND CODIFICATION
OF THE
LAWS AND ORDINANCES
OF THE
KITÁB-I-AQDAS

Comments

December 6. On this date in 2008, four of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and three in the United States (Portland, Chicago, and Atlanta).

Original file: 0559.html (position #137)

December 6. On this date in 2008, four of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and three in the United States (Portland, Chicago, and Atlanta).

Universal House of Justice member Peter Khan would later give a talk on July 3, 2009, later published as "Reflections on the Ridvan 2009 Message," stating,

> *As you are, I am sure, aware, that series of conferences had a galvanizing effect on the Bahá'í Community throughout the world and ultimately on the larger society. It was a tangible demonstration of the global spread of the Faith and it created a most welcome surge toward the goal of 1500 Intensive Programs of Growth by the end of the present plan.*

How does membership in the International Teaching Centre lead to election to the Universal House of Justice?

How is it that with its nine members elected every five years from the male membership in good standing of the worldwide Bahá'í community by an electoral college consisting of all the members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly throughout the world, the membership of the Universal House of Justice consists exclusively of men who have previously been appointed to the International Teaching Centre by the Universal House of Justice?

With no overt campaigning or politicking permitted, upon what does the electoral college base its election of new members to the Universal House of Justice?

In the Bahá'í electoral system, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. Members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice.

Consider the cases of Stephen Birkland and Stephen Hall. Stephen Birkland was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2008 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010. Stephen Hall was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2005 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010.

In a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

In that period, Stephen Birkland attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 1-2, 2008	Lusaka, Zambia
November 8-9, 2008	Johannesburg, South Africa
November 29-30, 2008	Antofagasta, Chile

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
December 6-7, 2008	Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America
January 17-18, 2009	Vancouver, Canada
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany
February 21-22, 2009	Accra, Ghana

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Birkland"

In that period, Stephen Hall attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 15-16, 2008	Bangui, Central African Republic
November 22-23, 2008	Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo
November 29-30, 2008	Yaoundé, Cameroon
December 6-7, 2008	Portland, Oregon, United States of America
December 13-14, 2008	Stamford, Connecticut, United States of America
January 3-4, 2009	Abidjan, Ivory Coast
January 17-18, 2009	Lae, Papua New Guinea
January 24-25, 2009	Sydney, Australia
January 31-February 1, 2009	Auckland, New Zealand
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Hall"

No other Bahá'ís receive as much exposure to electors of the Universal House of Justice as

do members of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

When the Universal House of Justice appoints members to the International Teaching Centre, they are in fact selecting their own replacements.

In the Bahá'í electoral system, with no overt campaigning and politicking permitted, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. The nine members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice. In fact, every single one of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

To illustrate further, in a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

Each of the 41 Regional Conferences was attended by two Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre with the exception of the Conference held at Uvira, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which had only one representative. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre at the time of the Regional Conferences were Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, Stephen Birkland, Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker.

Of this cohort of Counsellors, the five lady members (Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker) were ineligible for election to

the Universal House of Justice.

Of the four male members at the time of the 41 Regional Conferences (Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, and Stephen Birkland), all have been elected to the Universal House of Justice.

In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. In the people's democracies of the Eastern Bloc, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

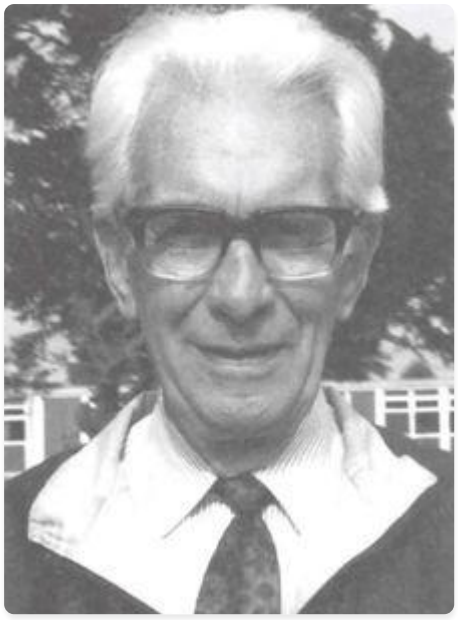
The next member elected to the Universal House of Justice will be Andrej Donoval, who is the longest tenured male member of the International Teaching Centre, having been appointed to that body in 2013.

Comments

December 6. On this date in 1919, Owen Battrick was born in England. He pioneered to New Caledonia, served on the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific Islands as secretary, on the NSA of New Zealand as treasurer, and as an Auxiliary Board member and Counsellor for Australasia.

Original file: 0558.html (position #136)

December 6. On this date in 1919, Owen Battrick was born in England. He pioneered to New Caledonia, served on the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific Islands as secretary, on the NSA of New Zealand as treasurer, and as an Auxiliary Board member and Counsellor for Australasia.



Comments

Baha'i History - December 6. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote "There is no objection that the believers look at the picture of Bahá'u'lláh, but they should do so with the utmost reverence, and should also not allow that it be exposed openly to the public, even in their private homes."

Original file: 0557.html (position #135)

December 6. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote "There is no objection that the believers look at the picture of Bahá'u'lláh, but they should do so with the utmost reverence, and should also not allow that it be exposed openly to the public, even in their private homes."

> *1833. Photograph of Bahá'u'lláh*
>
> *"There is no objection that the believers look at the picture of Bahá'u'lláh, but they should do so with the utmost reverence, and should also not allow that it be*

exposed openly to the public, even in their private homes."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 6, 1939)

Comments

December 7. On this date in 1969, the UHJ wrote regarding "the relationship between the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice," noting "Shoghi Effendi’s statement that 'Without such an institution [the Guardianship] ... the necessary guidance to define the sphere of ...'"

Original file: 0556.html (position #134)

December 7. On this date in 1969, the Universal House of Justice wrote regarding "the relationship between the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice," noting "Shoghi Effendi’s statement that 'Without such an institution [the Guardianship] ... the necessary guidance to define the sphere of the legislative action of its elected representatives would be totally withdrawn.' Some of the youth, you indicate, were puzzled as to how to reconcile the former of these two passages with such statements as that in the Will of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá which affirms that the Universal House of Justice is 'freed from all error.'" The letter

continues "one must first realize that there is and can be no real contradiction in them, and in the light of this we can confidently seek the unity of meaning which they contain...Future Guardians are clearly envisaged and referred to in the Writings."

Comments on the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice

7 DECEMBER 1969

To an individual Bahá'í

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Your recent letter, in which you share with us the questions that have occurred to some of the youth in studying "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh," has been carefully considered, and we feel that we should comment both on the particular passage you mention and on a related passage in the same work, because both bear on the relationship between the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice.

The first passage concerns the Guardian's duty to insist upon a reconsideration by his fellow members in the Universal House of Justice of any enactment which he believes conflicts with the meaning and departs from the spirit of the Sacred Writings.

*The second passage concerns the infallibility of the Universal House of Justice without the Guardian, namely Shoghi Effendi's statement that "Without such an institution [the Guardianship] ... the necessary guidance to define the sphere of the legislative action of its elected representatives would be totally withdrawn."**1***

*Some of the youth, you indicate, were puzzled as to how to reconcile the former of these two passages with such statements as that in the Will of Abdu'l-Bahá which affirms that the Universal House of Justice is "freed from all error."**2***

Seeking the Writings' Unity of Meaning

*Just as the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahi does not in any way contradict the Kitab-i-Aqdas but, in the Guardian's words, "confirms, supplements, and correlates the provisions of the Aqdas," so the writings of the Guardian contradict neither the revealed Word nor the interpretations of the Master.**3** In attempting to understand the Writings, therefore, one must first realize that there is and can be*

no real contradiction in them, and in the light of this we can confidently seek the unity of meaning which they contain.

*The Guardian and the Universal House of Justice have certain duties and functions in common; each also operates within a separate and distinct sphere. As Shoghi Effendi explained, ". . . it is made indubitably clear and evident that the Guardian of the Faith has been made the Interpreter of the Word and that the Universal House of Justice has been invested with the function of legislating on matters not expressly revealed in the teachings. The interpretation of the Guardian, functioning within his own sphere, is as authoritative and binding as the enactments of the International House of Justice, whose exclusive right and prerogative is to pronounce upon and deliver the final judgment on such laws and ordinances as Bahá'u'lláh has not expressly revealed." He goes on to affirm, "Neither can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other. Neither will seek to curtail the specific and undoubted authority with which both have been divinely invested." It is impossible to conceive that two centers of authority, which the Master has stated "are both under the care and protection of the Abha Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of His Holiness, the Exalted One, could conflict with one another, because both are vehicles of the same Divine Guidance.**4***

*The Universal House of Justice, beyond its function as the enactor of legislation, has been invested with the more general functions of protecting and administering the Cause, solving obscure questions and deciding upon matters that have caused difference. Nowhere is it stated that the infallibility of the Universal House of Justice is by virtue of the Guardian's membership or presence on that body. Indeed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Shoghi Effendi in his "Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh have both explicitly stated that the elected members of the Universal House of Justice in consultation are recipients of unfailing Divine Guidance. Furthermore the Guardian himself in The World Order Bahá'u'lláh asserted that "It must be also clearly understood by every believer that the institution of Guardianship does not under any circumstances abrogate, or even in the slightest degree detract from, the powers granted to the Universal House of Justice by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitabu'l-Aqdas, and repeatedly and solemnly confirmed by Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will. It does not constitute in any manner a contradiction to the Will and Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, nor does it nullify any of His revealed instructions."**5***

While the specific responsibility of the Guardian is the interpretation Of the Word,

*he is also invested with all the powers and prerogatives necessary to discharge his function as Guardian of the Cause, its Head and supreme protector. He is, furthermore, made the irremovable head and member for life of the supreme legislative body of the Faith. It is as the head of the Universal House of Justice, and as a member of that body, that the Guardian takes part in the process of legislation. If the following passage, which gave rise to your query, is considered as referring to this last relationship, you will see that there is no contradiction between it and the other texts: "Though the Guardian of the Faith has been made the permanent head of so august a body he can never, even temporarily, assume the right of exclusive legislation. He cannot override the decision of the majority of his fellow members, but is bound to insist upon a reconsideration by them of any enactment he conscientiously believes to conflict with the meaning and to depart from the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh revealed utterances.**6***

Although the Guardian, in relation to his fellow members within the Universal House of Justice, cannot override the decision of the majority, it is inconceivable that the other members would ignore any objection he raised in the course of consultation or pass legislation contrary to what he expressed as being in harmony with the spirit of the Cause. It is, after all, the final act of judgment delivered by the Universal House of Justice that is vouchsafed infallibility, not any views expressed in the course of the process of enactment.

It can be seen, therefore, that there is no conflict between the Master's statements concerning the unfailing divine guidance conferred upon the Universal House of justice and the above passage from "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh."

The Process of Legislation

It may help the friends to understand this relationship if they are aware of some of the processes that the Universal House of Justice follows when legislating. First, of course, it observes the greatest tare in studying the Sacred Texts and the interpretations of the Guardian as well as considering the views of all the members. After long consultation the process of drafting a pronouncement is put into effect. During this process the whole matter may well be reconsidered. As a result of such reconsideration the final judgment may be significantly different from the conclusion earlier favored, or possibly it may be decided not to legislate at all on that subject at that time. One can understand how great would be the attention paid to the views of the Guardian during the above process were he alive.

The Universal House of Justice in the Absence of the Guardian

In considering the second passage we must once more hold fast to the principle that the teachings do not contradict themselves.

Future Guardians are clearly envisaged and referred to in the Writings, but there is nowhere any promise or guarantee that the line of Guardians would endure forever; on the contrary there are clear indications that the line could be broken. Yet, in spite of this, there is a repeated insistence in the Writings on the indestructibility of the Covenant and the immutability of God's Purpose for this Day.

One of the most striking passages which envisage the possibility of such a break in the line of Guardians is in the Kitab-i-Aqdas itself:

*The endowments dedicated to charity revert to God, the Revealer of Signs. No one has the right to lay hold on them without leave from the Dawning-Place of Revelation.**7** After Him the decision rests with the Aghsan [Branches],**8** and after them with the House of Justice-should it be established in the world by then-so that they may use these endowments for the benefit of the Sites exalted in this Cause, and for that which they have been commanded by God, the Almighty, the All-Powerful. Otherwise the endowments should be referred to the people of Baha, who speak not without His leave and who pass no judgment but in accordance with that which God has ordained in this Tablet, they who are the champions of victory betwixt heaven and earth, so that they may spend them on that which has been decreed in the Holy Book by God, the Mighty, the Bountiful.**9***

*The passing of Shoghi Effendi in 1957 precipitated the very situation provided for in this passage, in that the line of Aghsan ended before the House of Justice had been elected. Although, as is seen, the ending of the line of Aghsan at some stage was provided for, we must never underestimate the grievous loss that the Faith has suffered. God's purpose for mankind remains unchanged, however, and the mighty Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh remains impregnable. Has not Bahá'u'lláh stated categorically, "The Hand of Omnipotence hath established His Revelation upon an unassailable, an enduring foundation."**10** ** **While 'Abdu'l-Bahá confirms: "Verily, God effecteth that which He pleaseth; naught can annul His Covenant; naught can obstruct His favor nor oppose His Cause!" "Everything is subject to corruption; but the Covenant of thy Lord***

shall continue to pervade all regions." "The tests of every dispensation are in direct proportion to the greatness of the Cause, and as heretofore such a manifest Covenant, written by the Supreme Pen, hath not been entered upon, the tests are proportionately severe .... These agitations of the violators are no more than the foam of the ocean .... This foam of the ocean shall not endure and shall soon disperse and vanish, while the ocean of the Covenant shall eternally surge and roar."*11**** *And Shoghi Effendi has clearly stated: "The bedrock on which this Administrative Order is founded is God's immutable Purpose for mankind in this day." ". . . this priceless gem of Divine Revelation, now still in its embryonic state, shall evolve within the shell of His law, and shall forge ahead, undivided and unimpaired, till it embraces the whole of mankind."****12***

Two Authoritative Centers

*In the Bahá'í Faith there are two authoritative centers appointed to which the believers must turn, for in reality the Interpreter of the Word is an extension of that center which is the Word itself. The Book is the record of the utterance of Bahá'u'lláh, while the divinely inspired Interpreter is the living Mouth of that Book- it is he and he alone who can authoritatively state what the Book means. Thus one center is the Book with its Interpreter, and the other is the Universal House of Justice guided by God to decide on whatever is not explicitly revealed in the Book. This pattern of centers and their relationships is apparent at every stage in the unfoldment of the Cause. In the Kitab-i-Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh tells the believers to refer after His passing to the Book, and to "Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root."****13*** *In the Kitab-i-Aqdas (the Book of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant), He makes it clear that this reference is to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.****14*** *In the Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh also ordains the institution of the Universal House of Justice, and confers upon it the powers necessary for it to discharge its ordained functions. The Master in His Will and Testament explicitly institutes the Guardianship, which Shoghi Effendi states was clearly anticipated in the verses of the Kitab-i-Aqdas, reaffirms and elucidates the authority of the Universal House of Justice, and refers the believers once again to the Book: "Unto the Most Holy Book everyone must turn, and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice," and at the very end of the Will He says: "All must seek guidance and turn unto the Center of the Cause and the House of Justice. And he that turneth unto whatsoever else is indeed in grievous error."****15***

As the sphere of jurisdiction of the Universal House of Justice in matters of legislation extends to whatever is not explicitly revealed in the Sacred Text, it is clear that the Book itself is the highest authority and delimits the sphere of action of the House of Justice. Likewise, the Interpreter of the Book must also have the authority to define the sphere of the legislative action of the elected representatives of the Cause. The writings of the Guardian and the advice given by him over the thirty-six years of his Guardianship show the way in which he exercised this function in relation to the Universal House of Justice as well as to National and Local Spiritual Assemblies.

The fact that the Guardian has the authority to define the sphere of the legislative action of the Universal House of Justice does not carry with it the corollary that without such guidance the Universal House of Justice might stray beyond the limits of its proper authority; such a deduction would conflict with all the other texts referring to its infallibility, and specifically with the Guardian's own clear assertion that the Universal House of Justice never can or will infringe on the sacred and prescribed domain of the Guardianship. It should be remembered, however, that although National and Local Spiritual Assemblies can receive divine guidance if they consult in the manner and spirit described by Abdu'l-Bahá, they do not share in the explicit guarantees of infallibility conferred upon the Universal House of Justice. Any careful student of the Cause can see with what care the Guardian, after the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, guided these elected representatives of the believers in the painstaking erection. of the Administrative Order and in the formulation of Local and National Bahá'í Constitutions.

We hope that these elucidations will assist the friends in understanding these relationships more clearly, but we must all remember, that we stand too close to the beginnings of the System ordained by Bahá'u'lláh to be able fully to understand its potentialities or the interrelationships of its component parts. As Shoghi Effendi's secretary wrote on his behalf to an individual believer on 25 March 1930, "The contents of the Will of the Master are far too much for the present generation to comprehend. It needs at least a century of actual working before the treasures of wisdom hidden in it can be revealed.

With loving Bahá'í greetings, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

***1** WOB, p. 148*

***2** WT, p. 14.*

3 *WOB, p. 19.*

4 *WOB, pp. 149-50; WT p. 11.*

5 *WOB, p. 8.*

6 *WOB, P. 150.*

7 "The Dawning-Place of Revelation' is a reference to the Manifestation of God; here, a specific reference to Bahá'u'lláh.

8 *Aghsan (Branches) denotes the sons and male descendants of Bahá'u'lláh.*

9 *See KA paragraph 42.*

10 *WOB, p. 109.*

11 *TABA 2:598; Star of the West, vol. 4, no. 10, P. 170; SWAB, pp. 210-11.*

12 *WOB, p. 156, 23.*

13 *KA paragraph 121.*

14 *TB, pp. 217-23.*

15 *WT, pp. 19, 26.*

Comments

December 7. On this date in 1952, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to Abba Hushi, the Mayor of Haifa, addressing him as "Your Worship."

Original file: 0555.html (position #133)

December 7. On this date in 1952, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to Abba Hushi, the Mayor of Haifa, addressing him as "Your Worship."

> *Your Worship:*
>
> *Your letter of November 30th has been received by me on my return from Bahji, and I wish to assure you that the Bahá'í Community will be happy to co-operate in making the city of Haifa luminous and beautiful, in connection with the Symposium to be held at the Hebrew Technical College on Problems of Illumination, especially so as this Symposium will be held during Hanukka. I will give instructions that the period of illumination of our Shrine should be extended during these days [the Shrine was always flood-lit every night at sunset for a short time], and wish also to extend through your Worship an invitation to the delegates and visitors attending the Symposium to enter the Shrine and gardens on one of the evenings when they will be touring our city, to enjoy the illumination. The necessary arrangements can be made to open the gates and Shrine for them, if we are informed in advance.*
>
> *Yours sincerely,*

> *Shoghi Rabbani*
>
> *World Head of the Bahá'í Faith.*

Comments

December 7. On this date in 1983, Yvonne Liegois died. Born in Paris, France, she would later move to Bolivia where she became a Bahá’í. Although Marina Núñez del Prado was the first Bolivian Bahá’í, she did not remain active, so Yvonne Liegois Cuellar is recognized as the first Bahá’í in Bolivia.

Original file: 0554.html (position #132)

December 7. On this date in 1983, Yvonne (Liegois) Cuellar died in Littleton, Colorado. Born in Paris, France, she would later move to Bolivia where she became a Bahá’í. Although the artist Marina Núñez del Prado was the first Bolivian Bahá’í, she did not remain active, so Yvonne Liegois Cuellar is recognized as the first Bahá’í in Bolivia.

Born in France on March 11, 1896, Yvonne Cuellar and her husband, Arturo Cuellar, lived in La Paz, Bolivia, in the 1940s where they had an American boarder, Eleanor Adler, who

was first Bahá'í pioneer to Bolivia. Both she and her husband became Bahá'ís and helped establish the first Baha'i community of La Paz.

Yvonne Liegois Cuellar became a Bahá'í on May 18, 1941. Although Marina Núñez del Prado, a celebrated sculptor, was the first Bolivian to become a Bahá'í, on February 2, 1941, she did not remain active, so Yvonne Cuellar is recognized as the first Bahá'í in Bolivia. Shoghi Effendi called her the "Mother of Bolivia". Arturo Cuellar would later become a Bahá'í in 1946 through his wife's efforts.

In 1953, the Cuellars moved to the United States but returned to Bolivia in 1956 at the request of the National Spiritual Assembly of that country. In 1958 she traveled to France to help establish the inaugural National Spiritual Assembly, which was dissolved two years later through reports of Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qásim Faizi by the authority of the Custodians due to a majority of the Assembly's acceptance of Charles Mason Remey's claim to being the second Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith subsequent to the death of Shoghi Effendi.

In 1968 the Cuellars once again moved to the United States. Yvonne Cullear died in Littleton, Colorado on December 7, 1983.

Bolivia/United States

'Spiritual Mother of Bolivia' dies at 87

A world citizen she was. Yvonne Cuellar, the "Spiritual Mother of Bolivia," exemplified love, devotion and a fervent Bahá'í spirit during her lifetime while tirelessly teaching the Cause on several continents.

Born March 11, 1896, in Paris, she began her world travels while still a young woman. Her indomitable spirit and firm ideas about justice, the equality of men and women, and the independent investigation of truth prepared the way for her acceptance of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

When at last she heard the word "Bahá'í," while living in Bolivia with her husband, Arturo Cuellar, she immediately fell in love with the Message of Bahá'u'lláh and soon afterward became the first declared Bahá'í in Bolivia.

Mrs. Cuellar was a flame of fire in her teaching efforts, igniting many souls and opening the door of search and acceptance for many believers in the years to follow.

It wasn't long before her loving Bahá'í presence moved the first two Indians in Bolivia to accept the new teachings and take up the banner of Bahá'u'lláh. So great were her efforts in serving the Faith that the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, bestowed upon her the title, "Mother of Bolivia." Her fervent cry always was "teach, teach, teach," and her vibrant energy lit many candles as she marched from door to door and city to city proclaiming the truth of the new Revelation.

After teaching in Bolivia for more than 20 years, the Cuellars moved to the United States in 1969 to live near their daughter. They settled in Littleton, Colorado, and made their home a center of Bahá'í activity where many declarations occurred, many elaborate programs were lovingly and carefully prepared, and firesides, deepenings and prayer sessions were always memorable.

Such occasions always served to increase Mrs. Cuellar's awareness of the tremendous needs and responsibilities of the Faith, and she strived constantly to reach out, to teach, to pray and to serve, meanwhile searching always for those souls who might be receptive to the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

Yvonne Cuellar died December 7, 1983, at the age of 87, leaving an indelible legacy of love, sacrifice and devotion for the many Bahá'ís and other friends who knew and loved her. Over a period of many years she had contributed her help and dedication to the establishment of many Bahá'í localities and helped to strengthen a large number of Spiritual Assemblies in Colorado and elsewhere.

Her love for Bolivia never waned, and she dreamed always of returning. As a tribute to her memory, the Bahá'ís of Bolivia ordered an engraved plaque to be placed on her grave, mentioning that she was the spiritual mother of that country.

Mrs. Cuellar expressed her deep love for the Faith through constant service and total devotion in teaching the oneness of religion, of God's Messengers, and of mankind.

This brief tribute to Mrs. Yvonne Cuellar, the "Spiritual Mother of Bolivia," was written for Bahá'í News *by Dorothy Stewart of Denver, Colorado.*

TO THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF BOLIVIA
SADDENED LEARN OF DEATH YVONNE CUELLAR, LOYAL AND FIRM SERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, FOREVER DISTINGUISHED AS FIRST DECLARED BELIEVER IN BOLIVIA. OFFER PRAYERS AT HOLY THRESHOLD FOR THE PROGRESS OF HER SOUL IN THE ABHÁ KINGDOM.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

TO HELEN CUELLAR VAGGALIS
DEEPLY LAMENT DEATH SPIRITUAL MOTHER BOLIVIA YVONNE CUELLAR. HER SERVICES AND ABSOLUTE DEDICATION TO BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, HER ENORMOUS SACRIFICES LOVINGLY REMEMBERED FUTURE GENERATIONS HISTORICAL ANNALS FAITH BOLIVIA. ALL BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES URGED COMMEMORATIVE MEETINGS WORTHY HER HIGH CONTRIBUTIONS. CONDOLENCES FAMILY AND DAUGHTER HELEN.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY BAHÁ'ÍS OF BOLIVIA

Comments

December 7. On this date in 1999, the Continental Board of Counsellors sent a compilation prepared by the of Bahá'í World Centre titled "Non-association with Covenant-breakers" to the NSAs of Alaska, Canada, and the Untied States.

Original file: 0553.html (position #131)

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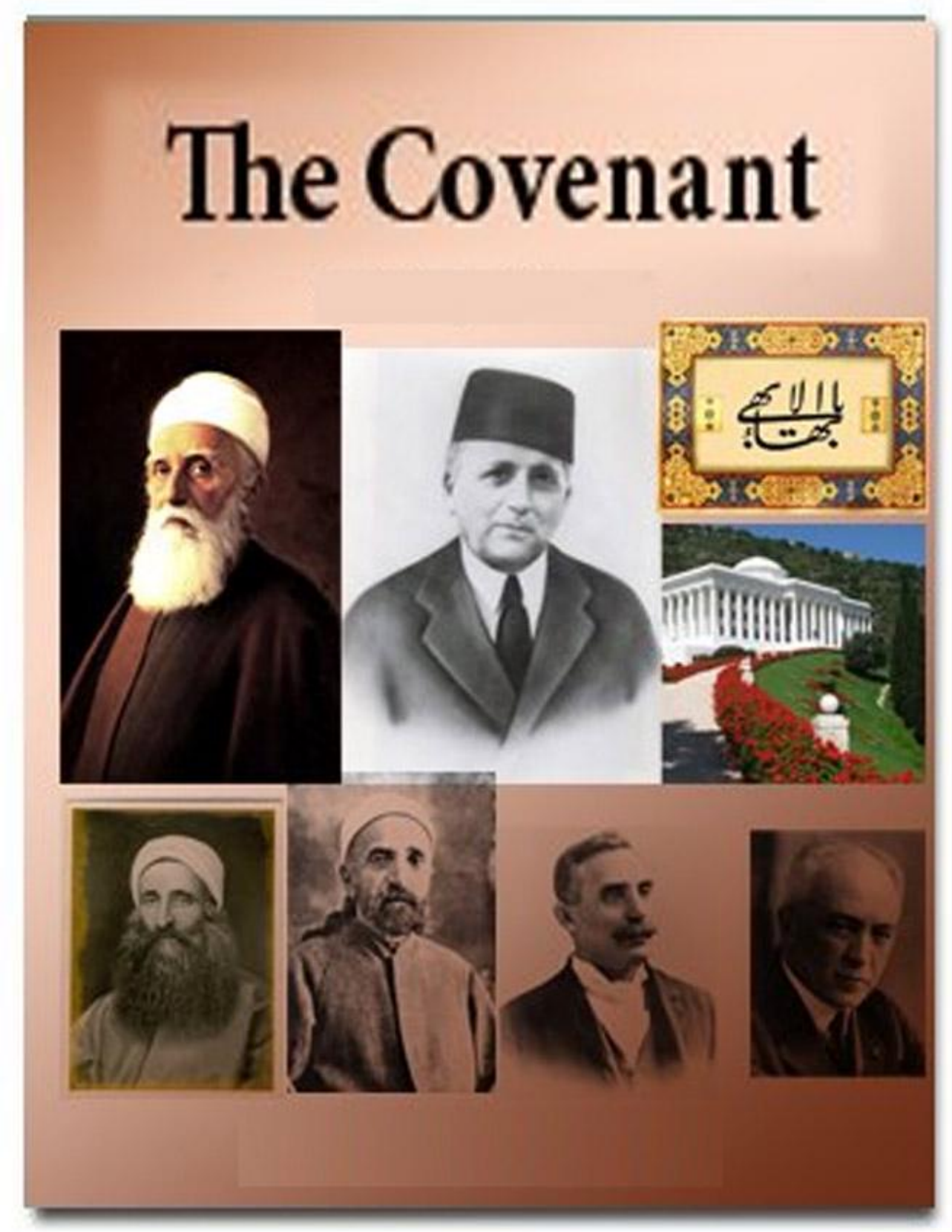


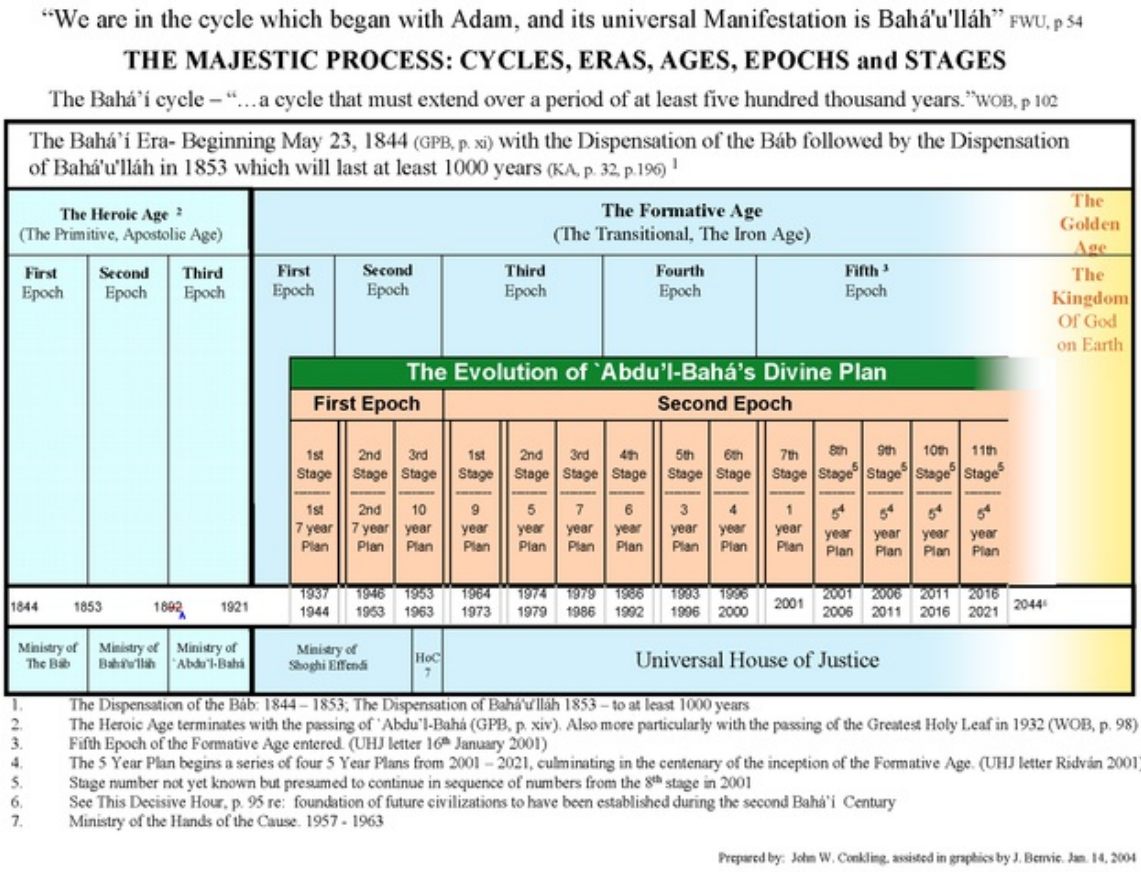
Comments

December 8. On this date in 1967, the Universal House of Justice wrote "... the great Plan of God, tumultuous in its progress, working through mankind as a whole, tearing down barriers to world unity and forging humankind into a unified body in the fires of suffering and experience."

Original file: 0552.html (position #130)

December 8. On this date in 1967, the Universal House of Justice wrote (also here) "... the great Plan of God, tumultuous in its progress, working through mankind as a whole, tearing down barriers to world unity and forging humankind into a unified body in the fires of suffering and experience. This process will produce, in God's due time, the Lesser Peace, the political unification of the world. Mankind at that time can be likened to a body that is unified but without life. The second process, the task of breathing life into this unified body--of creating true unity and spirituality culminating in the Most Great Peace--is that

of the Bahá'ís, who are labouring consciously, with detailed instructions and continuing divine guidance, to erect the fabric of the Kingdom of God on earth, into which they call their fellow-men, thus conferring upon them eternal life."


"We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh" FWU, p 54
THE MAJESTIC PROCESS: CYCLES, ERAS, AGES, EPOCHS and STAGES
The Bahá'í cycle – "…a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years." WOB, p 102
The Bahá'í Era- Beginning May 23, 1844 (GPB, p. xi) with the Dispensation of the Báb followed by the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh in 1853 which will last at least 1000 years (KA, p. 32, p.196) 1
The Heroic Age 2 (The Primitive, Apostolic Age)
The Formative Age (The Transitional, The Iron Age)
The Golden Age
First Epoch
Second Epoch
Third Epoch
First Epoch
Second Epoch
Third Epoch
Fourth Epoch
Fifth 3 Epoch
The Kingdom Of God on Earth
The Evolution of `Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan
First Epoch
Second Epoch
1st Stage 1st 7 year Plan
2nd Stage 2nd 7 year Plan
3rd Stage 10 year Plan
1st Stage 9 year Plan
2nd Stage 5 year Plan
3rd Stage 7 year Plan
4th Stage 6 year Plan
5th Stage 3 year Plan
6th Stage 4 year Plan
7th Stage 1 year Plan
8th Stage5 54 year Plan
9th Stage5 54 year Plan
10th Stage5 54 year Plan
11th Stage5 54 year Plan
1844 1853 1892 1921
1937 1944
1946 1953
1953 1963
1964 1973
1974 1979
1979 1986
1986 1992
1993 1996
1996 2000
2001
2001 2006
2006 2011
2011 2016
2016 2021
20446
Ministry of The Báb
Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh
Ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
Ministry of Shoghi Effendi
HoC 7
Universal House of Justice
1. The Dispensation of the Báb: 1844 – 1853; The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh 1853 – to at least 1000 years
2. The Heroic Age terminates with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (GPB, p. xiv). Also more particularly with the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1932 (WOB, p. 98)
3. Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age entered. (UHJ letter 16th January 2001)
4. The 5 Year Plan begins a series of four 5 Year Plans from 2001 – 2021, culminating in the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age. (UHJ letter Ridván 2001)
5. Stage number not yet known but presumed to continue in sequence of numbers from the 8th stage in 2001
6. See This Decisive Hour, p. 95 re: foundation of future civilizations to have been established during the second Bahá'í Century
7. Ministry of the Hands of the Cause. 1957 - 1963
Prepared by: John W. Conkling, assisted in graphics by J. Bernie. Jan. 14, 2004

Comments

December 8. On this date in 1967, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to an individual believer in an "attempt to clarify some of the points which bewilder you in the relationship of Bahá’ís to politics."

Original file: 0551.html (position #129)

December 8. On this date in 1967, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to an individual believer in an "attempt to clarify some of the points which bewilder you in the relationship of Bahá’ís to politics."

> *The Universal House of Justice*
>
> *8 December 1967*
>
> *[To an individual]*
>
> *Dear Bahá’í Friend,*
>
> *... we will gladly* ***attempt to clarify some of the points which bewilder you***

in the relationship of Bahá'ís to politics. *This is a matter of very great importance, particularly in these days when the world situation is so confused; an unwise act or statement by a Bahá'í in one country could result in a grave setback for the Faith there or elsewhere—and even loss of the lives of fellow-believers.*

The whole conduct of a Bahá'í in relation to the problems, sufferings and bewilderment of his fellowmen should be viewed in the light of God's purpose for mankind in this age and the processes He has set in motion for its achievement.

When Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed His Message to the world in the nineteenth century He made it abundantly clear that the first step essential for the peace and progress of mankind was its unification. As He says, "The well-being of mankind, its peace and security are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established." (The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 203) To this day, however, you will find most people take the opposite point of view: they look upon unity as an ultimate almost unattainable goal and concentrate first on remedying all the other ills of mankind. If they did but know it, these other ills are but various symptoms and side effects of the basic disease—disunity.

Bahá'u'lláh has, furthermore, stated that the revivification of mankind and the curing of all its ills can be achieved only through the instrumentality of His Faith. "The vitality of men's belief in God is dying out in every land; nothing short of His wholesome medicine can ever restore it. The corrosion of ungodliness is eating into the vitals of human society; what else but the Elixir of His potent Revelation can cleanse and revive it?" (Gleanings, XCIX) "That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician. This, verily, is the truth, and all else naught but error." (Gleanings, CXX) In similar vein, the beloved Guardian wrote:

> *Humanity, whether viewed in the light of man's individual conduct or in the existing relationships between organized communities and nations, has, alas, strayed too far and suffered too great a decline to be redeemed through the unaided efforts of the best among its recognized rulers and statesmen—however disinterested their motives, however concerted their action, however unsparing in their zeal and devotion to its cause. No scheme which*

> *the calculations of the highest statesmanship may yet devise, no doctrine which the most distinguished exponents of economic theory may hope to advance, no principle which the most ardent of moralists may strive to inculcate, can provide, in the last resort, adequate foundations upon which the future of a distracted world can be built. No appeal for mutual tolerance which the worldly-wise might raise, however compelling and insistent, can calm its passions or help restore its vigor. Nor would any general scheme of mere organized international cooperation, in whatever sphere of human activity, however ingenious in conception or extensive in scope, succeed in removing the root cause of the evil that has so rudely upset the equilibrium of present-day society. Not even, I venture to assert, would the very act of devising the machinery required for the political and economic unification of the world—a principle that has been increasingly advocated in recent times —provide in itself the antidote against the poison that is steadily undermining the vigor of organized peoples and nations. What else, might we not confidently affirm, but the unreserved acceptance of the Divine Program enunciated, with such simplicity and force as far back as sixty years ago, by Bahá'u'lláh, embodying in its essentials God's divinely appointed scheme for the unification of mankind in this age, coupled with an indomitable conviction in the unfailing efficacy of each and all of its provisions, is eventually capable of withstanding the forces of internal disintegration which, if unchecked, must needs continue to eat into the vitals of a despairing society.*

(The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 33–34)

We are told by Shoghi Effendi that two great processes are at work in the world: the great Plan of God, tumultuous in its progress, working through mankind as a whole, tearing down barriers to world unity and forging humankind into a unified body in the fires of suffering and experience. This process will produce in God's due time, the Lesser Peace, the political unification of the world. Mankind at that time can be likened to a body that is unified but without life. The second process, the task of breathing life into this unified body—of creating true unity and spirituality culminating in the Most Great Peace—is that of the Bahá'ís, who are laboring consciously, with detailed instructions and continuing divine guidance, to erect the fabric of the Kingdom of God on earth, into which they call their fellowmen, thus conferring upon them eternal life.

The working out of God's Major Plan proceeds mysteriously in ways directed by Him alone, but the Minor Plan that He has given us to execute, as our part in His grand design for the redemption of mankind, is clearly delineated. It is to this work that we must devote all our energies, for there is no one else to do it. So vital is this function of the Bahá'ís that Bahá'u'lláh has written: "O friends! Be not careless of the virtues with which ye have been endowed, neither be neglectful of your high destiny. Suffer not your labors to be wasted through the vain imaginations which certain hearts have devised. Ye are the stars of the heaven of understanding, the breeze that stirreth at the break of day, the soft-flowing waters upon which must depend the very life of all men, the letters inscribed upon His sacred scroll. With the utmost unity, and in a spirit of perfect fellowship, exert yourselves, that ye may be enabled to achieve that which beseemeth this Day of God." (Gleanings, XCVI)

Because love for our fellowmen and anguish at their plight are essential parts of a true Bahá'í's life, we are continually drawn to do what we can to help them. It is vitally important that we do so whenever the occasion presents itself, for our actions must say the same thing as our words—but this compassion for our fellows must not be allowed to divert our energies into channels which are ultimately doomed to failure, causing us to neglect the most important and fundamental work of all. There are hundreds of thousands of well-wishers of mankind who devote their lives to works of relief and charity, but a pitiful few to do the work which God Himself most wants done: the spiritual awakening and regeneration of mankind.

It is often through our misguided feeling that we can somehow aid our fellows better by some activity outside the Faith, that Bahá'ís are led to indulge in politics. This is a dangerous delusion. As Shoghi Effendi's secretary wrote on his behalf: "What we Bahá'ís must face is the fact that society is rapidly disintegrating—so rapidly that moral issues which were clear a half century ago are now hopelessly confused, and what is more, thoroughly mixed up with battling political interests. That is why the Bahá'ís must turn all their forces into the channel of building up the Bahá'í Cause and its administration. They can neither change nor help the world in any other way at present. If they become involved in the issues the governments of the world are struggling over, they will be lost. But if they build up the Bahá'í pattern they can offer it as a remedy when all else has failed." (Bahá'í News, No. 241, p. 14) "We must build up our Bahá'í system, and leave the faulty systems of the world to go their own way. We cannot change them through becoming involved in them; on the contrary they will destroy us." (Bahá'í News, No. 215, p. 1)

Other instructions from the Guardian, covering the same theme in more detail, can be found on pages 24 and 29 to 32 of Principles of Bahá'í Administration (1963 edition); you are no doubt already familiar with these.

The key to a true understanding of these principles seems to be in these words of Bahá'u'lláh: "O people of God! Do not busy yourselves in your own concerns; let your thoughts be fixed upon that which will rehabilitate the fortunes of mankind and sanctify the hearts and souls of men. This can best be achieved through pure and holy deeds, through a virtuous life and a goodly behavior. Valiant acts will ensure the triumph of this Cause, and a saintly character will reinforce its power. Cleave unto righteousness, O people of Bahá! This, verily, is the commandment which this wronged One hath given unto you, and the first choice of His unrestrained Will for every one of you." (Gleanings, XLIII).

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Comments

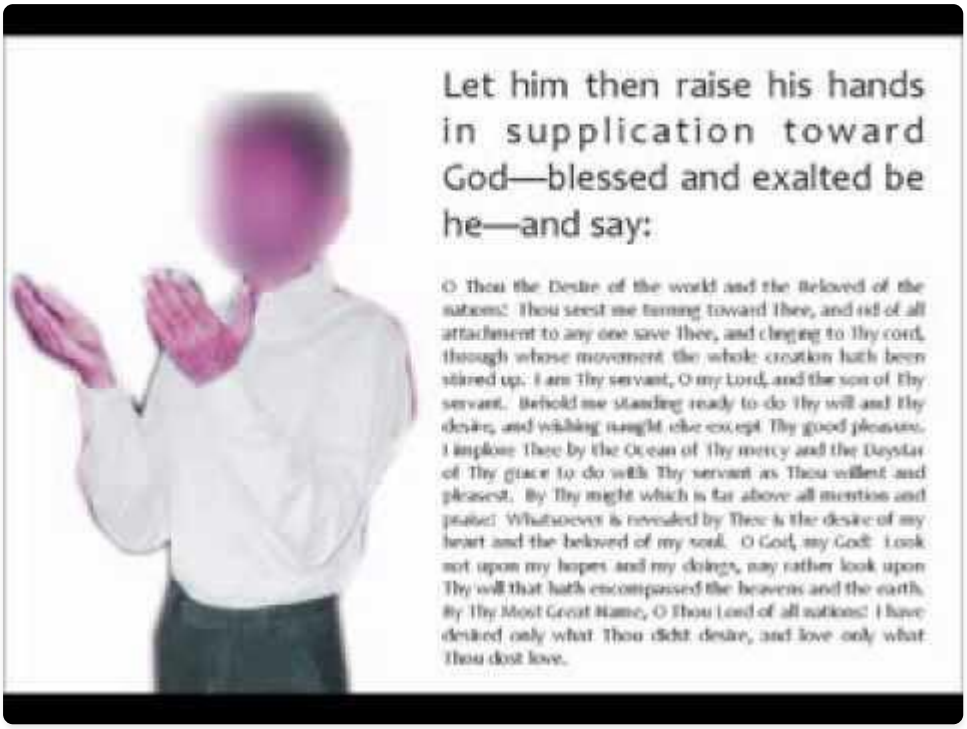
December 8. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "It is not sufficient for a believer merely to accept and observe the teachings. He should, in addition, cultivate the sense of spirituality which he can acquire chiefly by means of prayer."

Original file: 0550.html (position #128)

December 8. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "It is not sufficient for a believer merely to accept and observe the teachings. He should, in addition, cultivate the sense of spirituality which he can acquire chiefly by means of prayer."

> *1704. Core of Religious Faith*
>
> *"For the core of religious faith is that mystical feeling which unites man with God. This state of spiritual communion can be brought about and maintained by means of meditation and prayer. And this is the reason why Bahá'u'lláh has so much stressed the importance of worship. It is not sufficient for a believer merely to accept and observe the teachings. He should, in addition, cultivate the sense of spirituality which he can acquire chiefly by means of prayer."*

> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, December 8, 1935: Bahá'í News, No. 102, August 1936, p. 2)*


Let him then raise his hands in supplication toward God—blessed and exalted be he—and say:
O Thou the Desire of the world and the Beloved of the nations! Thou seest me turning toward Thee, and rid of all attachment to any one save Thee, and clinging to Thy cord, through whose movement the whole creation hath been stirred up. I am Thy servant, O my Lord, and the son of Thy servant. Behold me standing ready to do Thy will and Thy desire, and wishing naught else except Thy good pleasure. I implore Thee by the Ocean of Thy mercy and the Daystar of Thy grace to do with Thy servant as Thou willest and pleasest. By Thy might which is far above all mention and praise! Whatsoever is revealed by Thee is the desire of my heart and the beloved of my soul. O God, my God! Look not upon my hopes and my doings, nay rather look upon Thy will that hath encompassed the heavens and the earth. By Thy Most Great Name, O Thou Lord of all nations! I have desired only what Thou didst desire, and love only what Thou dost love.

Comments

December 9. On this date in 1985, an attachment to a letter written on behalf of the UHJ to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Netherlands delineated the "restrictions and limitations" imposed on "one who has lost his voting rights is considered to be a Bahá'í but not one in good standing."

Original file: 0549.html (position #127)

December 9. On this date in 1985, an attachment to a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Netherlands delineated the "restrictions and limitations" imposed on "one who has lost his voting rights is considered to be a Bahá'í but not one in good standing."

> *216. Summary of the Extent of Deprivation of Voting Rights*

"...One who has lost his voting rights is considered to be a Bahá'í but not one in good standing. The following restrictions and limitations apply to such a believer:

He cannot attend Nineteen Day Feasts or other meetings for Bahá'ís only, including International Conferences, and therefore cannot take part in consultation on the affairs of the community.

He cannot contribute to the Bahá'í Fund.

He cannot receive newsletters and other bulletins whose circulation is restricted to Bahá'ís.

He cannot have a Bahá'í marriage ceremony and therefore is not able to marry a Bahá'í.

He may not have a Bahá'í pilgrimage.

Although he is free to teach the Faith on his own behalf, he should not be used as a teacher or speaker in programs sponsored by Bahá'ís.

He is debarred from participating in administrative matters, including the right to vote in Bahá'í elections.

He cannot hold office or be appointed to a committee.

He should not be given credentials (which imply that he is a Bahá'í in good standing)."

(From an attachment to a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Netherlands, December 9, 1985)

Comments

December 9. On this date in 1984, the UHJ wrote an NSA "cannot itself arrange for the cremation of the remains of a Bahá'í even if it was that person's wish ... Bahá'í relatives, likewise, are under the obligation of obeying the Bahá'í law and must not agree to the cremation of a Bahá'í."

Original file: 0548.html (position #126)

December 9. On this date in 1984, the Universal House of Justice explained to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany that "Obviously a Spiritual Assembly cannot itself arrange for the cremation of the remains of a Bahá'í even if it was that person's wish that his body be disposed of in this way. Bahá'í relatives, likewise, are under the obligation of obeying the Bahá'í law and must not agree to the cremation of a Bahá'í."

670. Spiritual Assembly Cannot Arrange for the Cremation of the Remains of a Bahá'í

*"**Obviously a Spiritual Assembly cannot itself arrange for the cremation of the remains of a Bahá'í even if it was that person's wish that his body be disposed of in this way. Bahá'í relatives, likewise, are under the obligation of obeying the Bahá'í law and must not agree to the cremation of a Bahá'í.** Where non-Bahá'í relatives of the deceased Bahá'í have charge of the body and are proposing to cremate the remains, the responsible Spiritual Assembly should do all it can to explain the Bahá'í attitude to the relatives in an effort to prevent the cremation. If these efforts fail, the Assembly can have nothing officially to do with the cremation of the body; the believers, however, are free to do as they wish about attending the funeral and the cremation and they may certainly offer a prayer for the progress of the soul of the deceased. The Assembly could, if it seemed appropriate, arrange a meeting at a time other than the funeral, at which the Prayer for the Dead could be said on behalf of the deceased."*

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany, December 9, 1984)

Comments

December 9. On this date in 1956, Juliet Thompson died. On November 15, 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk at the home of Juliet Thompson in New York. Earlier that year, on June 1, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had his first sitting for his portrait painted by Juliet Thompson in her New York studio.

Original file: 0547.html (position #125)

December 9. On this date in 1956, Juliet Thompson passed away. On November 15, 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk at the home of Juliet Thompson in New York. Earlier that year, on June 1, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had his first sitting for his portrait painted by Juliet Thompson in her New York studio. While pictures, sketches, and photographs of 'Abdu'l-Bahá are ubiquitous in Bahá'í homes, those of Bahá'u'lláh are less so although the prohibition is equally applicable to both.

Comments

December 9. On this date in 1984, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Germany "if a Bahá'í makes a provision in his will that is contrary to Bahá'í law, that provision is null and void in Bahá'í law, and neither the Bahá'í relatives nor the Spiritual Assembly are permitted to fulfil it."

Original file: 0546.html (position #124)

December 9. On this date in 1984, the Universal House of Justice wrote the NSA of Germany "if a Bahá'í makes a provision in his will that is contrary to Bahá'í law, that provision is null and void in Bahá'í law, and neither the Bahá'í relatives nor the Spiritual Assembly are permitted to fulfil it."

> *642. Cremation is Contrary to Bahá'í Law--Bahá'í Relatives and the Spiritual*

Assembly Are Responsible

"As was explained to your Assembly in a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice on 10 January 1978, if a Bahá'í makes a provision in his will that is contrary to Bahá'í law, that provision is null and void in Bahá'í law, and neither the Bahá'í relatives nor the Spiritual Assembly are permitted to fulfil it. Thus, if a Bahá'í states in his will that his remains are to be cremated he should, nevertheless, be buried in accordance with Bahá'í law unless there is some element of the civil law would prevent such an occurrence--in which case the civil law would have to be followed, but the Assembly, as indicated above, could take no part in it...."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany, December 9, 1984)

Comments

December 9. On this date in 1931, Shoghi Effendi wrote "It is our duty, we who have been trusted with the task of applying the divine remedy given by Bahá'u'lláh...not rest until the peace foretold by the Prophets of God is permanently established."

Original file: 0545.html (position #123)

December 9. On this date in 1931, Shoghi Effendi wrote "It is our duty, we who have been trusted with the task of applying the divine remedy given by Bahá'u'lláh, to concentrate our attention upon the consummation of this task and not rest until the peace foretold by the Prophets of God is permanently established."

> *1421. Do Not Rest Until the Peace Foretold by the Prophets is Permanently Established*
>
> *"The world is in great turmoil, and what is most pathetic is that it has learned to keep away from God, Who alone can save it and alleviate its sufferings. It is our duty, we who have been trusted with the task of applying the divine remedy given by Bahá'u'lláh, to concentrate our attention upon the consummation of this task*

> *and not rest until the peace foretold by the Prophets of God is permanently established."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, December 9, 1931: Peace, op. cit.)*

Comments

December 9. On this date in 1909, Gertrude Blum, later named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Solomon Islands, was born.

December 9. On this date in 1909, Gertrude Blum, later named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Solomon Islands, was born.

Gertrude Blum was born on December 9, 1909, to a Jewish family in New York City and converted to the Bahá'í Faith at the age of 19. Mrs. Blum and her husband, Alvin, were named Knights of Bahá'u'lláh for being the first Bahá'ís to settle in the Solomons in 1954, when they moved there along with their seven-year-old daughter Keithie.

Gertrude Blum was awarded the Member of the British Empire (MBE) medal by Queen Elizabeth II in 1989.

She was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Australia and New Zealand, the first Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific, and the first National Assembly of the South West Pacific Ocean.

Alvin died in 1968. Gertrude Blum died on June 5, 1993, in the Solomon Islands.

In 2013, one of the Blums' daughter, Keithie Blum Saunders, who has served as the United States Consular Agent to the Solomon Islands, published a book about her parents experiences titled *Of Wars and Worship; The extraordinary story of Gertrude and Alvin Blum*.

An article in 2017 noted that Noah Jarrah, Keithie's grandson (the "4th generation connected to Solomon Islands") "was here visiting because of the 75th Commemoration of the Landing of the American troops on Guadalcanal leading to the retreat of the Japanese

several months later. Keithie Saunders, Noah's grandmother, has been instrumental in planning the five day events for this occasion." At the time Noah Jarrah was studying Aerospace at the University of Maryland where he was also an Air Force ROTC cadet.

Michael Day wrote a review of the book for Baha'i Blog...

> *Alvin Blum reached out and shook the hand of the Solomon Islander.*
>
> *This simple act said it all about Alvin's very real belief in the oneness of humanity.*
>
> *The everyday greeting of shaking hands was not practiced between Europeans and locals in the Solomons in the 1950s. There still existed an insidious "master-boy relationship" produced by colonialism.*
>
> *But Alvin, like his wife Gertrude, was a true Baha'i and was having none of it.*
>
> *Not only did Alvin shake the man's hand, but he invited him home for a meal where Gertrude's delicious stew and hot tea accompanied discussions of spiritual things in an atmosphere of love, laughter and equality.*
>
> *"The news of this event soon spread through the village networks," writes Keithie Saunders in Of Wars and Worship, her emotionally gripping biography of her parents, who were named Knights of Baha'u'llah for introducing the Faith to the Solomon Islands.*
>
> *The man Alvin greeted with a handshake, Bill Gina, became the first Baha'i in the Solomons.*
>
> *As the book recounts, over the decades to come – in their everyday spontaneous acts of kindness as well as in their planned activities in business and for the Baha'i Faith – the Blums demonstrated their heartfelt commitment to the fundamental principle of Baha'u'llah, that all people are equal members of one human family.*
>
> *With the assistance of professional writer Prue Rushton, Keithie Saunders has written a book that moves away from the standard biography of spiritual heroes.*
>
> *Using the techniques of a novelist, she breathes life into the characters, surrounding the facts with the thoughts and feelings of the protagonists. Some of those thoughts and feelings come from the Blums themselves, some are clearly inferred and are added with literary licence to keep the story alive and moving.*

Hollywood could not have thought up this story. A US military medic who had such traumatic experiences in the war torn Solomons' island of Guadalcanal in World War 2 that he never spoke about them returns to the island with his equally impressive wife to bring Baha'u'llah's message of world peace through world unity.

The author describes her parents and their lives in a frank manner, not hesitating to portray their difficulties and weaknesses as well as their strengths and triumphs.

In doing so, the couple emerge as very real people, not super humans, but as folk who conquered themselves and achieved superhuman results.

Coming from a Jewish background in the United States, the Blums first lived, taught and proclaimed their faith in the racially divided Southern States. The book has absorbing accounts of Jewish life in New York that reach back into the history of both Alvin and Gertrude's families. Disturbing as well as happy incidents are described.

We learn how Alvin (1912-68) and Gertrude (1909-1993) became Baha'is, how they served the Faith together, how they fell in love, and later how they married.

There is a lovely pen portrait of Mary Maxwell as a young woman long before she became Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum, the wife of the Guardian: "she is the freest spirit Gertrude has encountered, untamed and untainted". Decades later, Ruhiyyih Khanum visited Gertrude in the Solomons.

For the Baha'is of New Zealand, now celebrating the centenary of their community, there is important historical information about the Baha'i activities of Alvin Blum when he was a medic stationed in Auckland in World War 2. He returned with Gertrude after the war had ended.

For Australian readers there is a funny anecdote about how Hand of the Cause Collis Featherstone, Mr Frank Khan (father of Dr Peter Khan) and Alvin Blum had to share the same room at a Baha'i conference because they were unable to afford individual accommodation. It had only one double bed. "Well here we are," he [Alvin] chuckles. "A Muslim, a Jew and a Christian all sharing a bed. If that is not the oneness of mankind what is?"

As a study of personalities the book is intriguing. Alvin is a dynamic, go-getter businessman always coming up with ideas and then putting them into practice. He

is restless, full of energy. Gertrude on the other hand is ethereal and contemplative —and cautious in the practical matters of life.

Alvin and Gertrude could exasperate each other but there was no question that what they had in common was an unshakeable faith in the teachings of Baha'u'llah.

This combination of opposites, a living example of the Baha'i principle of unity in diversity, had a power that will humble most readers

As a businessman, Alvin dedicated himself to the development of the Solomons. He introduced into the country a taxi service, a "hometel", a dry cleaning business, a bakery, an ice cream and soft drink business. He was also a member of the Honiara Town Council, established the Chamber of Commerce and the Scout Movement.

His energy for new enterprises was astounding, his bravery incredible — he once rescued a shark attack victim amidst a sea of blood.

Gertrude helped establish the National Council of Women and the Red Cross Society, but her contributions were far more widespread at a personal and organisation level than that description can cover. Her services to the Faith in themselves were extraordinary. Mrs Blum was named a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 1989. The Governor-General attended her funeral and throughout the islands there were memorial gatherings in her honour.

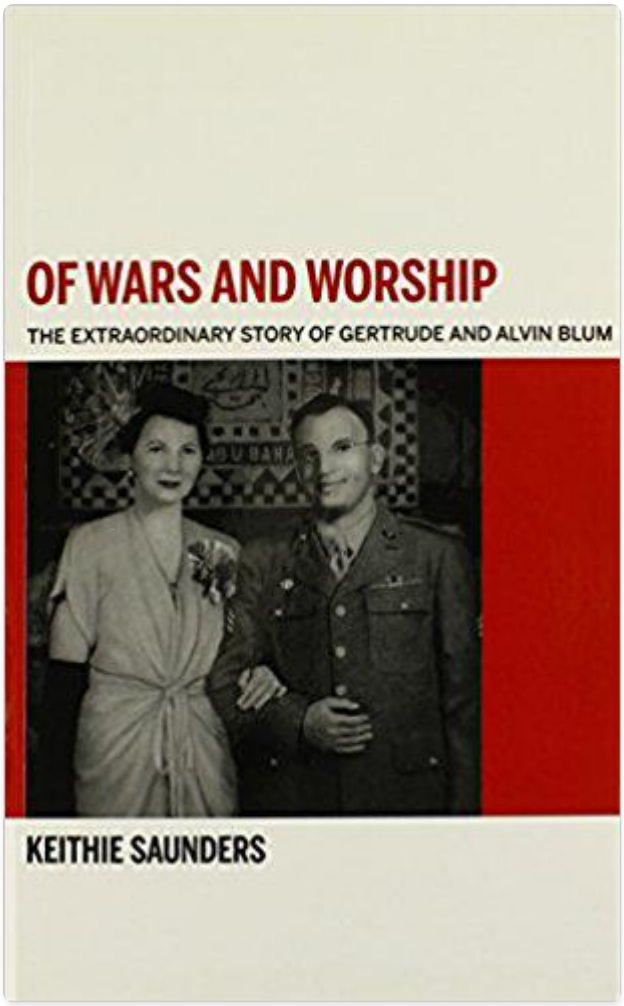
One of the most touching aspects of the book is the theme of the love and support of the head of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi, for their service.

There is a truly tear-jerking account of what happened when the Blums— with Gertrude particularly apprehensive—were about to sail to their pioneering post.

A friend on the wharf shouted out to Alvin, who then walked back down the gangplank to where he was handed a telegram, the words of which were to sustain the Blums forever and which today are emblazoned on Gertrude's resting place.

The cable contained these simple words:

"LOVING PRAYERS SURROUNDING YOU. SHOGHI."


OF WARS AND WORSHIP
THE EXTRAORDINARY STORY OF GERTRUDE AND ALVIN BLUM
KEITHIE SAUNDERS

Comments

December 10. On this date in 1964, Alyce Janssen, Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for Spanish Morocco, died in Santa Rosa, California.

December 10. On this date in 1964, Alyce Janssen, Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for Spanish Morocco, died in Santa Rosa, California.

What has always struck me about the designation of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh is the arbitrariness with which the "virgin territories" were defined. For example, the Cook Islands and Tonga Island, both part of the Realm of New Zealand have distinct sets of Knights, while Niue and the Chatham Islands, also part of the Realm of New Zealand, are Knightless.

Several islands off the coast of Alaska have distinct Knights, like Baranof Island , Kodiak Island, and the Aleutian Islands. Yet other Alaskan islands, like the Pribilof Islands are Knightless.

The Brazilian state of Amapá has its own Knights (for Portuguese Guiana), while the other Brazilian states are Knightless.

Crete and Rhodes have Knights distinct from the Knights of mainland Greece, yet other Greek islands, like Santorini and Samos, are Knightless.

Key West has its own Knight, yet the other Florida Keys are Knightless.

Tiny islands, like Grand Manan, have their own Knights. St. Thomas Island has its own Knight, yet the remaining Leeward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands. Similarly, the Windward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent

islands.

Comments

December 10. On this date in 1898, the first Western pilgrims arrived in ‘Akká. Led by Ibrahim George Kheiralla, the group included Phoebe Hearst, Lua Getsinger, May Maxwell, and Robert Turner. In ‘Akká, they witnessed first hand the conflict between `Abdu'l-Bahá and his brothers.

Original file: 0542.html (position #120)

The first Western Bahá'í pilgrims, pictured in the winter of 1898. Ibrahim George Kheiralla is seated in the middle of the front row. Lua Getsingersits second from right. Standing in the left is Robert Turner.

December 10. On this date in 1898, the first Western pilgrims arrived in ‘Akká. Led by Ibrahim George Kheiralla, the group included Phoebe Hearst, Lua Getsinger, May Maxwell, and Robert Turner. In ‘Akká, they witnessed first hand the conflict between

`Abdu'l-Bahá and his brothers.

On November 11, 1849, Ibrahim George Kheiralla was born to a Christian family in a village on Mount Lebanon. He later studied medicine at the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut.

Ibrahim George Kheiralla converted to the Bahá'í Faith while living in Egypt in 1889 when he met Hájí `Abdu'l-Karím-i-Tihráni. Kheiralla went through Europe and eventually came to the United States in late 1892 where he joined Anton Haddad, the first Bahá'í to come to America. Initially, Kheiralla settled in New York where he began teaching "Truth Seeker" classes. He visited Charles Augustus Briggs and others, as well as the Syrian community in New York.

In 1894 Kheiralla moved on to Chicago following the interest fostered by the World's Columbian Exposition's World Parliament of Religions. In Chicago he taught "Truth Seeker" classes. One of the early converts while Kheiralla was in Chicago was Thornton Chase, who had read the presentation about the Bahá'ís at the Exposition, and is generally considered the first Bahá'í convert in the West to have remained in the religion. Other individuals had converted, but none remained members of the religion.

Another to join the religion from Kheiralla's early classes was Howard MacNutt, who would later compile *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, a prominent collection of the addresses of `Abdu'l-Bahá during his journeys in America. Both men were designated as "Disciples of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" and "Heralds of the Covenant" by Shoghi Effendi.

Another student of the classes and Disciple was Lua Getsinger, designated as the "mother teacher of the West".

Another who "passed" the class and joined the religion was the maverick Honoré Jackson. Kheiralla moved once again, to Kenosha, Wisconsin, in 1895, where a large Bahá'í community soon developed.

Because of his success promulgating the Bahá'í Faith in North America, 'Abdu'l-Bahá titled Kheiralla "Bahá's Peter," "the Second Columbus" and "Conqueror of America." 'Abdu'l-Bahá would write a Tablet to Ibráhím George Kheiralla.

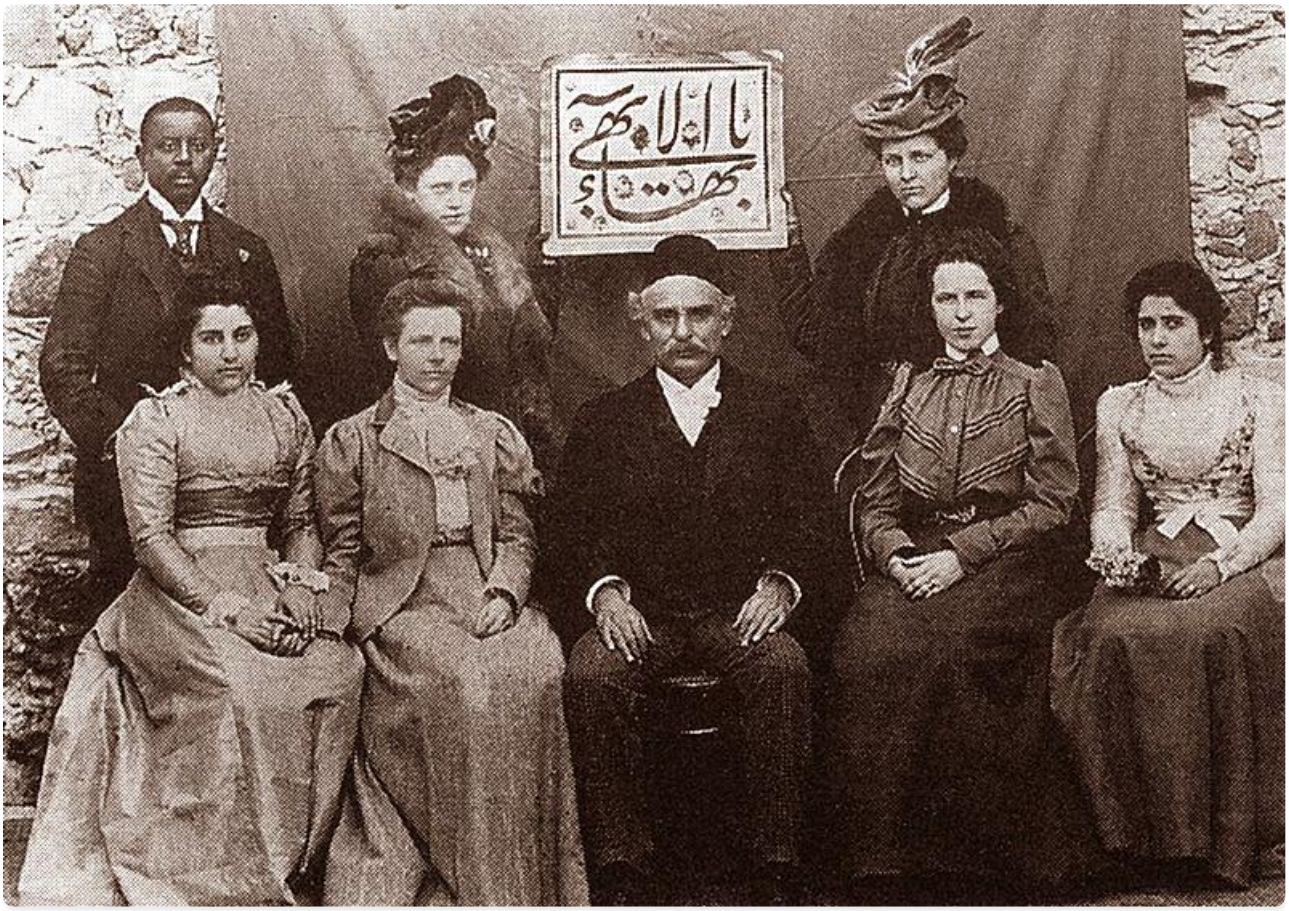
In 1898, Kheiralla undertook a Bahá'í pilgrimage to Palestine to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá with other American pilgrims, including Phoebe Hearst, Lua Getsinger and May Boles. In Akka, Kheiralla witnessed first hand the conflict between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his brothers. Upon his return to America in 1899, Kheiralla began to announce his avowed leadership of Western

Bahá'ís independent of `Abdu'l-Bahá and authored a book, *Beha'u'llah*, wherein he states his belief that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was equal in rank to his brothers Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí, Díyá'u'lláh, and Badi'u'lláh. Early after the return to America, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent, first, Anton Haddad with a letter contesting the definition of leadership, then Khieralla's initial teacher of the religion, 'Abdu'l-Karím-i-Tihráni, to confront him.

The conflict made the newspapers. Ultimately, in the conflict between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí, Kheiralla sided with the latter for which he was declared a Covenant-breaker.

Kheiralla would go on to form the "Society of Behaists," which would later be led by Shua Ullah Behai and eventually become defunct. Kheiralla had three children, two daughters who were named Nabeeha and Labiba, and a son named George Ibrahim Kheirallah who converted Islam in the 1930s, becoming active in the Islamic Society of New York, and translated and published some poems of Khalil Gibran.

Ibrahim George Kheiralla died on March 6, 1929.



Comments

December 10. On this date in 1992, the UHJ published a compilation titled "Issues Related to the Study of the Bahá'í Faith" on the nature of opposition to the Bahá'í Faith from within academia, identifying "the principal roots of the problem."

Original file: 0541.html (position #119)

December 10. On this date in 1992, the Universal House of Justice published a compilation titled "Issues Related to the Study of the Bahá'í Faith" on the nature of opposition to the Bahá'í Faith from within academia, especially as conducted via the Internet, identifying "the principal roots of the problem" to a scholar "who experience difficulties with the policy of review."

1. Compilation "Issues Related to the Study of the Bahá'í Faith" Published in Bahá'í Canada, May 1998

[1] 10 December 1992

The House of Justice understands that there are certain Bahá'í scholars, such as yourself, who experience difficulties with the policy of review, but it finds the cause of the difficulties to lie in areas that are different from those you identify. It would point to the following as being the principal roots of the problem:

Too narrow and limited understanding of the Faith and its Teachings on the part of certain Bahá'í scholars. There has been a tendency to specialize in certain narrow areas and neglect the wider understanding of the Teachings which would not only enrich their souls but illuminate their perception of the specific areas of their study.

An attitude to the Faith and the Administrative Order which is strongly coloured by an assumption that the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh is similar to other religions and organizations, is afflicted by the attitudes which have too often characterized them, and is motivated by unethical considerations. The institutions of the Cause are regarded with the same suspicion as the traditional "establishment". This produces a failure to understand, let alone accept, the points which the Universal House of Justice itself is striving to convey.

An assumption that only a person equipped with conventional academic training is capable of an unbiased attitude and of truly understanding the points at issue, leading to disdain of questions raised by "unqualified" individuals.

Failure to use the appeal processes of the Cause by scholars who are faced with what they regard as improper and unjustified questioning of their writings by Bahá'í reviewing committees. It is natural that, in the present stage of the development of the Cause, the members of reviewing committees will, from time to time, err in their views or be unreasonably obtuse. Such errors and attitudes should be overcome through discussion between the author and the members of the committee. If this does not lead to a satisfactory outcome, the author can appeal to the National Spiritual Assembly itself and, if even that does not solve the matter, to the Universal House of Justice.

The above attitudes, in turn, lead to an inability on the part of those scholars to describe the review process to their non-Bahá'í colleagues in terms that would not be unacceptable in an academic environment.

Your suggestion that an "imprimatur" system such as used by the Roman Catholic Church would be preferable to the present system of review was considered by the House of Justice, and it has asked us to explain to you the problems that this would present.

First of all, it would convey to the reader the false impression that the attitude of the Faith was similar to that of the Roman Catholic Church, summoning up visions of an "index" of

prohibited reading, and all the other associations which you can undoubtedly imagine for yourself.

Secondly, it would give force to the erroneous concept that there are two kinds of Bahá'í literature: books which present the "official" view and those which are the free personal opinions of individual Bahá'ís, thus obscuring the essential Bahá'í differentiation between the Writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, those of `Abdu'l-Bahá, the letters of the Guardian and the decisions of the Universal House of Justice, which are authoritative, on the one hand, and all other writings by Bahá'ís on the other, which have no authority at all apart from their own internal reasonableness. That a book has passed review in no way guarantees its correctness; it is merely an assurance by the National Spiritual Assembly concerned that, in its view, the book does not seriously distort the Faith or its Teachings.

Thirdly, it would obscure the important fact that the process of review in the Bahá'í Faith is temporary, being limited to this stage of its development when books published by Bahá'ís could seriously mislead the public if they too gravely distort its message.

Your proposal that a National Spiritual Assembly which detected major inaccuracies in an article published by a Bahá'í in an academic journal could have the Research Department "write a letter to the concerned journal pointing out and listing these inaccuracies, giving the requisite textual evidence in footnotes", that journal editors would be "quite willing to entertain such correspondence" and that it would be found that Bahá'í scholars would be "grateful for chance to discuss such issues freely" introduces a new kind of discrimination and interference. Bahá'í institutions very seldom write to journals to correct their statements about the Faith; not only do they not wish to promote public disputes with those who write about the Cause, but the correction of such errors is seldom worth the time and effort necessary. In the coming years there will be numerous non-Bahá'ís, ranging from those who are bitter enemies of the Cause to those who are its warm advocates, publishing articles about it. There is no way in which Bahá'í institutions could write corrections of the multitudinous errors that will be published; how, then, would they be justified in writing to correct only the errors perpetrated by Bahá'í authors?

The House of Justice suggests that you consider the following steps through which the scholars of the Faith can overcome the problems which some of them perceive as presented by review of their publications.

Let them accept unreservedly that `Abdu'l-Bahá was right in instituting the temporary system of review, and that the decisions of the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice to not yet eliminate the system are in accordance with the Divine will.

Let them recognize the fundamental difference between errors propagated by Bahá'ís from those issuing from non-Bahá'í sources. The review system is not an attempt to prevent errors or attacks on the Faith from being published; it is an attempt to prevent Bahá'ís from promulgating them in their published writings.

Let them strive to understand the wisdom of this policy and its true nature, and to present it in its proper light to their fellow-academics....

Let Bahá'í scholars look upon their fellow Bahá'ís with trust and affection, not with disdain as to their qualifications and suspicion as to their motives. Let them regard them as devoted Bahá'ís striving to perform a service which the policies of the Faith require of them. And let them not hesitate to discuss openly with such reviewers the points which they raise. If it appears that a National Spiritual Assembly does not permit such open discussion, let them appeal to the Universal House of Justice for clarification of the situation. It is well understood by the Universal House of Justice that in some cases the process of review works inefficiently and with problems. These deficiencies could be overcome if the scholars themselves would collaborate with the process and openly raise questions about its functioning, rather than fostering an atmosphere of antagonism and mutual mistrust.

If the question of review is raised by non-Bahá'í academics, let the Bahá'í academics say that in this early stage in the development of the Faith this is a species of peer review which they welcome, since it is primarily among their fellow Bahá'ís that they would find at this time those who would have sufficiently wide and deep understanding of the Faith and its Teachings to raise issues of importance which they would want to consider before publication. Of course, to be able to say this with sincerity, the scholars must have been able to accept the other steps mentioned above.

You cite the case of Bahá'ís in other fields of expertise, such as Bahá'í physicians who, you say, "may pursue their professions as Bahá'ís with no prospect of interference by Bahá'í institutions". This is hardly the case. All Bahá'ís are subject to Bahá'í law and Bahá'í standards. It would clearly be unacceptable for a Bahá'í doctor to advocate abortion as a method of birth control and set up a clinic for that purpose, or for a Bahá'í psychiatrist to publicly advocate sexual intercourse before marriage.

Bahá'u'lláh was addressing all of us when He wrote: "Were any man to taste the sweetness of the words which the lips of the All-Merciful have willed to utter, he would, though the treasures of the earth be in his possession, renounce them one and all, that he might vindicate the truth of even one of His commandments, shining above the Dayspring of His

bountiful care and loving-kindness" and "Whoso hath inhaled the sweet fragrance of the All-Merciful, and recognized the Source of this utterance, will welcome with his own eyes the shafts of the enemy, that he may establish the truth of the laws of God amongst men."

Finally, the House of Justice wishes us to say that it fully agrees with your statement that it is important for the Faith to attract intellectuals and, indeed, all people of capacity in any field. Bahá'ís who themselves are intellectuals can contribute signally to this process, but not by ignoring the basic standards of faith and conduct that apply to all believers or by depicting the Bahá'í administration as a bureaucratic hindrance to freedom of thought and expression.

Comments

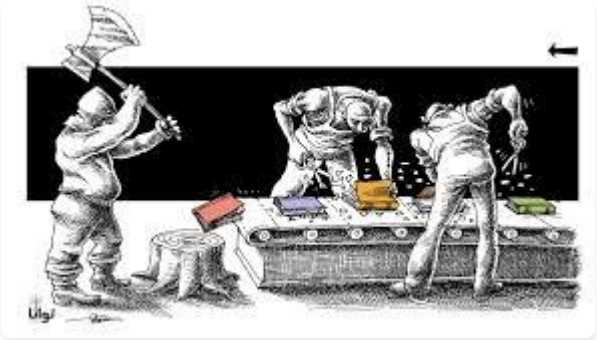
December 10. On this date in 1981, the UHJ wrote "Bahá'í authors, writing about the Faith, are requested to have their work approved for publication by the National Spiritual Assembly of the country where such work is published."

Original file: 0540.html (position #118)

December 10. On this date in 1981, the Universal House of Justice wrote "Bahá'í authors, writing about the Faith, are requested to have their work approved for publication by the National Spiritual Assembly of the country where such work is published."

> *347. Bahá'í Writers Should Have Their Works Approved for Publication by National Assembly of Country Where Published*
>
> *"It is not the practice of the World Centre to review the writings of individual Bahá'ís intended for publication. As you know, Bahá'í authors, writing about the Faith, are requested to have their work approved for publication by the National Spiritual Assembly of the country where such work is published. There is no objection whatever, to your submitting your manuscript to a non-Bahá'í firm,*

> *provided that the approval of the manuscript by the National Assembly is first obtained."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, December 10, 1981)*



Comments

December 10. On this date in 2014, a letter regarding Kalimat Press was received by the UHJ, who noted Kalimat "was pursuing a particular editorial agenda, offering certain titles that were not in keeping with the best interests of the Faith" therefore LSAs "no longer distribute its publications."

Original file: 0539.html (position #117)

December 10. On this date in 2014, a letter "regarding Kalimat Press was received by the Universal House of Justice and forwarded to our department for response. As a result of concerns that Kalimat Press was pursuing a particular editorial agenda, offering certain titles that were not in keeping with the best interests of the Faith, in 2005 the National Spiritual Assemblies of the United States and Canada asked Local Spiritual Assemblies to no longer distribute its publications. Individuals are free, of course, to decide to purchase books from any publisher."

May 2015

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Your letter dated 10 December 2014 seeking clarification regarding Kalimat Press was received by the Universal House of Justice and forwarded to our department for response. As a result of concerns that Kalimat Press was pursuing a particular editorial agenda, offering certain titles that were not in keeping with the best interests of the Faith, in 2005 the National Spiritual Assemblies of the United States and Canada asked Local Spiritual Assemblies to no longer distribute its publications. Individuals are free, of course, to decide to purchase books from any publisher.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

For Department of the Secretariat

Comments

Baha'i History - December 10. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá’í's "The friends should not feel unnecessarily agitated, but should have full confidence in the future which, we firmly believe, is gloriously bright."

Original file: 0538.html (position #116)

December 10. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá’í's "The friends should not feel unnecessarily agitated, but should have full confidence in the future which, we firmly believe, is gloriously bright."

> *10 December 1937*
>
> *Dear Frau Muhlschlegel,*
>
> *The Guardian was deeply rejoiced to receive your very cordial message of the first ins., and is indeed happy to know that during the next few months you will be travelling regularly to Zurich, and that you intend in this way to communicate to him any news regarding the situation of the Cause in Germany. He truly welcomes*

your offer, and feels that it is a most urgent and valuable service you can render the Faith.

Mr. Greeven, as you may know, is in close touch with the authorities in Berlin, and has so far succeeded in inducing the government to give more sympathetic consideration to our case. The secretary of the Minister for Church affairs has promised him that the funds, books and archives will be returned, but that there can be no hope of having the government rescind the rulings entirely. The negotiations, as you see, have not been quite in vain. ***The friends should not feel unnecessarily agitated, but should have full confidence in the future which, we firmly believe, is gloriously bright.*** *As in the past, the German Bahá'í Community will eventually overcome and crush such forces of opposition, and will arise, out of the storm and stress of its present-day afflictions, stronger and purer and more determined to accomplish its allotted task in the establishment of the New World Order. Assure the believers that they have no reason whatsoever to feel distressed. The Cause is God's and is therefore in safe hands.*

Regarding the German translation of the "Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh"; a copy of the German text of that pamphlet prepared by Miss Grossmann was forwarded to Haifa about two months ago through the care of Frau Brauns. The Guardian wrote her in answer, that he would keep the manuscript until such time when the time and means for its publication would be found.

Now he wishes to know whether the translation mentioned in your letter is the same as the one sent by Frau Brauns, or is a new rendering made by Dr. Muhlschlegel.

To you, to him, as well as to all your children he sends his loving thoughts and greetings....

P.S. At the Guardian's instruction I am mailing to your address a copy of the "Bahá'í World" vol. III, as to is not certain whether you or any of the German friends has seen this latest issue of the Year book....

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Dear and valued co-worker:

I wish to assure you and through you our dearly beloved German friends that the

> *trials to which they are subjected are but a prelude to an age of unprecedented glory and activity in the service of the Cause of God. These clouds will dissipate and the splendour of the Faith will be shed with increasing radiance. Let the Cause grow silently and acquire greater depths in the hearts of the tested believers in that land, and the day will surely come when its potentialities will be manifested in a manner that would cause every beholder to marvel.*
>
> *Your true brother,*
>
> *Shoghi*

On February 11, 1934, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to a German Bahá'í stating about the Nazi government that "obedience to the regulations and orders of the state is indeed, the sacred obligation of every true and loyal Bahá'í" and that "our German friends are under the sacred obligation to whole-heartedly obey the existing political regime, whatever be their personal views and criticisms of its actual working. There is nothing more contrary to the spirit of the Cause than open rebellion against the governmental authorities of a country, specially if they do not interfere in and do not oppose the inner and sacred beliefs and religious convictions of the individual. And there is every reason to believe that the present regime in Germany, which has thus far refused to trample upon the domain of individual conscience in all matters pertaining to religion will never encroach upon it in the near future, unless some unforeseen and unexpected changes take place. And this seems to be doubtful at present."

> *11 February 1934*
>
> *Dear Bahá'í Brother,*
>
> *I am charged by the Guardian to thank you for your letter of Jan. 30th as well as for the enclosed pamphlet containing the address delivered by Herr Hitler on Oct. 14th, 1933, on the subject of Germany's attitude towards peace, all of which he read with deepest care and sustained interest. He wishes me to convey to you and to all the members of your German National Assembly and through them to all the followers of the Faith in Germany his views on the present conditions in that land, and particularly in their relation to the nature and scope of the Bahá'í activities of our German believers.*

At the outset it should be made indubitably clear that the Bahá'í Cause being essentially a religious movement of a spiritual character stands above every political party or group, and thus cannot and should not act in contravention to the principles, laws, and doctrines of any government. ***Obedience to the regulations and orders of the state is indeed, the sacred obligation of every true and loyal Bahá'í.*** *Both Bahá'u'lláh and `Abdu'l-Bahá have urged us all to be submissive and loyal to the political authorities of our respective countries. It follows, therefore, that* ***our German friends are under the sacred obligation to whole-heartedly obey the existing political regime, whatever be their personal views and criticisms of its actual working. There is nothing more contrary to the spirit of the Cause than open rebellion against the governmental authorities of a country, specially if they do not interfere in and do not oppose the inner and sacred beliefs and religious convictions of the individual. And there is every reason to believe that the present regime in Germany which has thus far refused to trample upon the domain of individual conscience in all matters pertaining to religion will never encroach upon it in the near future, unless some unforeseen and unexpected changes take place. And this seems to be doubtful at present.***

For whereas the friends should obey the government under which they live, even at the risk of sacrificing all their administrative affairs and interests, they should under no circumstances suffer their inner religious beliefs and convictions to be violated and transgressed by any authority whatever. ***A distinction of a fundamental importance must, therefore, be made between spiritual and administrative matters. Whereas the former are sacred and inviolable, and hence cannot be subject to compromise, the latter are secondary and can consequently be given up and even sacrificed for the sake of obedience to the laws and regulations of the government. Obedience to the state is so vital a principle of the Cause that should the authorities in Germany decide to-day to prevent the Bahá'ís from holding any meeting or publishing any literature they should obey and be as submissive as our Russian believers have thus far been under the Soviet regime. But, as already pointed out, such an allegiance is confined merely to administrative matters which if checked can only retard the progress of the Faith for some time. In matters of belief, however, no compromise whatever should be allowed, even though the***

outcome of it be death or expulsion

There is one more point to be emphasized in this connection. The principle of obedience to government does not place any Bahá'í under the obligation of identifying the teachings of his Faith with the political program enforced by the government. For such an identification, besides being erroneous and contrary to both the spirit as well as the form of the Bahá'í message, would necessarily create a conflict within the conscience of every loyal believer.

For reasons which are only too obvious the Bahá'í philosophy of social and political organization cannot be fully reconciled with the political doctrines and conceptions that are current and much in vogue to-day. The wave of nationalism, so aggressive and so contagious in its effects, which has swept not only over Europe but over a large part of mankind is, indeed, the very negation of the gospel of peace and of brotherhood proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. The actual trend in the political world is, indeed, far from being in the direction of the Bahá'í teachings. The world is drawing nearer and nearer to a universal catastrophe which will mark the end of a bankrupt and of a fundamentally defective civilization.

From such considerations we can well conclude that we as Bahá'ís can in no wise identify the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh with man-made creeds and conceptions, which by their very nature are impotent to save the world from the dangers with which it is being so fiercely and so increasingly assailed.

The Guardian hopes that these brief explanations will be sufficient to guide our German National Assembly in their efforts to safeguard and promote the interests of the Faith, and that through them they will be given a new vision of the Cause and a fresh determination to carry forward its message to the world at large.

With greetings and best wishes to you and to all the friends in Germany,...

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Dear and valued co-worker:

I wish to add a few words in loving appreciation of your strenuous, your intelligent and devoted efforts for the spread and consolidation of our beloved Faith. May the Almighty bless your endeavours, deepen your understanding of the essentials and requirements of our beloved Cause, and enable you in these difficult and challenging days to promote its interests and consolidate its institutions,

> *Your true brother,*
>
> *Shoghi*

On April 25, 1938, one month after Nazi Germany's *Anschluss* of Austria, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated "it made him immensely happy to realize that the friends in Germany and Austria have been again drawn together, and are closer than ever in the past. He hopes that the removal of the barriers which have hitherto so sadly separated the German and Austrian communities will mark the beginning of a new era of unprecedented growth and expansion in your affairs."

> *25 April 1938*
>
> *Dear Friends,*
>
> *The postcard message which you had sent the Guardian on the occasion of Dr. Muhlschlegel's visit to Vienna, has just been received, and it made him immensely happy to realize that the friends in Germany and Austria have been again drawn together, and are closer than ever in the past. He hopes that the removal of the barriers which have hitherto so sadly separated the German and Austrian communities will mark the beginning of a new era of unprecedented growth and expansion in your affairs. He is certain that you are fully alive to the far-reaching possibilities which the present hour offers, and wishes you therefore to be happy and thankful, and confident in the blessings which the future has in store for you, and your dear co-workers in that land.*
>
> *I take this opportunity of assuring you once more of his prayers for your welfare, protection and continued guidance, and reciprocating your very kind greetings,...*
>
> *In the Guardian's own handwriting:*
>
> *Assuring you in person of my incessant prayers for your protection, guidance and happiness,*
>
> *your true and grateful brother,*
>
> *Shoghi*

Comments

December 10. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá’í's "Convey to believers the joyful news of the safe delivery on Mt. Carmel of a consignment of thirty-two granite monolith columns, part of the initial shipment of material ordered for construction of the arcade of the Báb's..."

Original file: 0537.html (position #115)

December 10. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá’í's "Convey to believers the joyful news of the safe delivery on Mt. Carmel of a consignment of thirty-two granite monolith columns, part of the initial shipment of material ordered for construction of the arcade of the Báb's Sepulcher, designed to envelop and preserve the sacred previous structure reared by 'Abdu'l-Bahá."

[December 10, 1948]

Arcade for the Shrine of the Báb

Convey to believers the joyful news of the safe delivery on Mt. Carmel of a consignment of thirty-two granite monolith columns, part of the initial shipment of material ordered for construction of the arcade of the Báb's Sepulcher, designed to envelop and preserve the sacred previous structure reared by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Building operations are soon starting notwithstanding the difficulties of the present situation. I am supplicating the Almighty's guidance and sustaining grace for successive stages of an enterprise envisaged sixty years ago by Bahá'u'lláh, initiated by the Center of His Covenant, designed to culminate as contemplated by Him in erection of a superstructure to be crowned by a golden dome marking the consummation at the heart of the Mountain of God of the momentous undertaking born through the generating influence of the Will of the Founder of our beloved Faith, so dear to the heart of His blessed Son, and dedicated to the memory of the Martyr-Prophet, the immortal Herald of the Bahá'í Dispensation.

Comments

December 11. On this date in 1994, the UHJ's Research Department responded to a letter "about the reason that the prayers of the Guardian are not translated into English" noting "the Universal House of Justice instructs us to advise that it does not feel that the time has come for this to be done.

December 11. On this date in 1994, the UHJ's Research Department responded to a letter "about the reason that the prayers of the Guardian are not translated into English" noting "the Universal House of Justice instructs us to advise that it does not feel that the time has come for this to be done."

Comments

December 11. On this date in 1952, Shoghi Effendi wrote "It should not be overlooked, however, that the most powerful and effective teaching medium that has been found so far is the fireside meeting, because in the fireside meeting, intimate personal questions can be answered, and the student ..."

Original file: 0535.html (position #113)

December 11. On this date in 1952, Shoghi Effendi wrote "It should not be overlooked, however, that the most powerful and effective teaching medium that has been found so far is the fireside meeting, because in the fireside meeting, intimate personal questions can be answered, and the student find the spirit of the Faith more abundant there."

> *1983 . It should not be overlooked, however, that the most powerful and effective*

teaching medium that has been found so far is the fireside meeting, because in the fireside meeting, intimate personal questions can be answered, and the student find the spirit of the Faith more abundant there.

(From a letter dated 11 December 1952 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a Local Spiritual Assembly and an individual believer)

Comments

December 11. On this date in 1972, Gretta Lamprill, the first Tasmanian Baha’i, died. She was the inaugural secretary of the Hobart LSA, a secretary of the NSA of Australia and New Zealand and a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for the Society Islands. She was known as the "Mother of Tasmania".

December 11. On this date in 1972, Gretta Lamprill, the first Tasmanian Baha’i, died. She was the inaugural secretary of the Hobart LSA, a secretary of the NSA of Australia and New Zealand and a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for the Society Islands. She was known as the "Mother of Tasmania".

What has always struck me about the designation of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh is the arbitrariness with which the "virgin territories" were defined. For example, the Cook

Islands and Tonga Island, both part of the Realm of New Zealand have distinct sets of Knights, while Niue and the Chatham Islands, also part of the Realm of New Zealand, are Knightless.

Several islands off the coast of Alaska have distinct Knights, like Baranof Island , Kodiak Island, and the Aleutian Islands. Yet other Alaskan islands, like the Pribilof Islands are Knightless.

The Brazilian state of Amapá has its own Knights (for Portuguese Guiana), while the other Brazilian states are Knightless.

Crete and Rhodes have Knights distinct from the Knights of mainland Greece, yet other Greek islands, like Santorini and Samos, are Knightless.

Key West has its own Knight, yet the other Florida Keys are Knightless.

Tiny islands, like Grand Manan, have their own Knights. St. Thomas Island has its own Knight, yet the remaining Leeward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands. Similarly, the Windward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands.

Comments

December 11. On this date in 1979, the UHJ answered a question about "if, prior to local elections an enrolled believer withdraws from the Faith and this leads to the removal of his name from Bahá'í membership, and yet he is subsequently elected to the Local Assembly"

Original file: 0533.html (position #111)

December 11. On this date in 1979, a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador answered a question about "if, prior to local elections an enrolled believer withdraws from the Faith and this leads to the removal of his name from Bahá'í membership, and yet he is subsequently elected to the Local Assembly"

> *48. If Enrolled Believer Withdraws--Subsequently Elected to Spiritual Assembly*
>
> *"Regarding your last question, if, prior to local elections an enrolled believer*

withdraws from the Faith and this leads to the removal of his name from Bahá'í membership, and yet he is subsequently elected to the Local Assembly, such votes as have been cast in his name are disregarded without invalidating the remaining votes on the ballots. If, however, the process of withdrawal has not taken place, that is, the believer refuses on the day of election to participate and expresses then his desire to withdraw from the community, and yet he is subsequently elected to the Assembly, since his withdrawal is generally unknown to the friends, in such a case the remaining eight elected members should meet, consider the withdrawal, and if his name has to be removed from Bahá'í membership, a by-election should be held to fill the vacancy."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador, December 11, 1979)

Bahá'í Faith
This card is the property of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States with whom rests final decision as to its validity.
If found return to:
Bahá'í National Center
Membership Office
1233 Central Street
Evanston, IL 60201

Comments

December 11. On this date in 1890, Mark Tobey was born. An American painter who converted to the Bahá′í Faith at Green Acre, he eventually settled in Switzerland in Switzerland in the early 1960s with his companion, Pehr Hallsten, with whom he had lived together since 1940.

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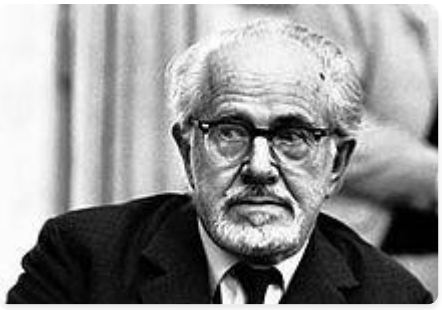

Comments

December 11. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote an individual "expressing concern that the provision of the Bahá'í marriage law requiring consent of living natural parents creates a double standard in your family because you have adopted children as well as your own."

December 11. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote an individual "expressing concern that the provision of the Bahá'í marriage law requiring consent of living natural parents creates a double standard in your family because you have adopted children as well as your own" noting "the unity of your family need not be imperilled because your adopted children when ready for marriage must obtain consent of their natural parents."

> *1251. Adopted Children and the Special Significance of Their Relationship with the Natural Parents*

"We acknowledge receipt of your letter of November 13, 1973 ***expressing concern that the provision of the Bahá'í marriage law requiring consent of living natural parents creates a double standard in your family because you have adopted children as well as your own.***

"We appreciate your concern and are in sympathy with your worthy aspiration to attain unity in your family group. ***However, the unity of your family need not be imperilled because your adopted children when ready for marriage must obtain consent of their natural parents.*** *Just as love for one person need not reduce the love one bears to another, so unity with the adoptive parents need not destroy nor reduce the unity a child may have with its natural parents, or vice versa. The characters and attitudes of the individuals concerned will have an effect upon this.*

"You also state that unless there is a broader concept of the meaning of 'natural parent', ***you feel the law creates disharmony.*** *Perhaps the following extract from a letter written on behalf of the beloved Guardian by his secretary was quoted to you by your National Spiritual Assembly, but we draw your attention to that portion we have underlined because it refers to the special significance of the relationship between children and their natural parents.*

*'****Bahá'u'lláh has clearly stated the consent of all living parents is required for a Bahá'í marriage....*** *This great law He has laid down to strengthen the social fabric, to knit closer the ties of the home, to place a certain gratitude and respect in the hearts of children for those who have given them life and sent their souls out on the eternal journey towards their Creator.'*

"In short, love for the foster parents and unity with their home should not exclude love for a child's natural parents, although it is likely a child will become very much more a part of the home in which he lives and grows up.

"Of course, wherever the law of the land or the Agreement of Adoption prohibits future contact between an adopted child and its natural parents, the Bahá'í law does not require the child to seek the consent of those parents to its marriage. However, children may very well wish to obtain the consent of their foster parents although not obliged to do so."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, December 11, 1973)

Comments

December 12. On this date in 2011, the UHJ addressed a letter stating "it gives us pleasure to inform you that we have created an International Advisory Board to assist the Ruhi Institute in overseeing its system for the preparation, production, and distribution of materials..."

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> *The Universal House of Justice*
>
> *12 December 2011*

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dearly loved Friends,

Across the globe Bahá'í communities are intently engaged in executing the provisions of the Five Year Plan. Its opening months now behind us, there is every indication that the study of recent guidance and deliberations on the nature and extent of capacity developed thus far are bearing fruit in focused, highly unified action at the grassroots. Principally through the efforts of homefront pioneers, in several hundred newly opened clusters, the first stirrings of a programme for the sustained expansion and consolidation of the Faith can already be felt, while in several hundred more, further along the continuum of growth, a pattern of rigorous activity is taking hold. Meanwhile the friends in those clusters in the forefront of learning are gaining mastery over the dynamics that characterize rapidly expanding, relatively large communities.

In this connection, we are particularly happy to note the degree of effort being exerted in every country to lend an added measure of vitality to the institute process, so critical if increasing numbers are to participate actively in the work required to bring into reality a new World Order. The operation of the institute board; the functioning of coordinators at different levels; the capabilities of friends serving as tutors of study circles, animators of junior youth groups, teachers of children's classes; and the promotion of an environment conducive at once to universal participation and mutual support and assistance—nowhere is the centrality of these to the fulfilment of the community's God-given mission lost on the friends. What has been especially heartening to observe in this respect is the widespread mobilization of resources dedicated to the junior youth spiritual empowerment programme. No less encouraging is the zeal with which institutes have greeted the challenge of preparing teachers for successive grades of Bahá'í children's classes as additional materials for this purpose have been made available. It seems timely, then, to offer National Spiritual Assemblies and their training institutes further guidance on the implementation of the main sequence of courses and those that branch off from it.

The path of service

A number of years ago, to aid the believers in thinking about the process of growth at the level of the cluster, we introduced the concept of two complementary movements. The progress of a steady, ever-widening stream of individuals

through the courses of the institute represents one of these. It is not only responsible for giving impetus to the other—the development of the cluster, discernable in the collective capacity to manifest a pattern of life in conformity with the teachings of the Faith—but also dependent on it for its own perpetuation. It was in view of mounting evidence of the effects of the Ruhi Institute curriculum on these two mutually reinforcing movements that we recommended its adoption worldwide six years ago. At the time, we did not comment specifically on the pedagogical principles governing the curriculum; nevertheless, it should be apparent to the friends that the curriculum possesses desirable characteristics, some of which have been described in broad terms in our messages regarding the current series of global Plans. Of particular significance is its organizing principle: developing capacity to serve the Cause and humanity in a process likened to walking a path of service. This conception shapes both content and structure.

The main sequence of courses is organized so as to set the individual, whether Bahá'í or not, on a path being defined by the accumulating experience of the community in its endeavour to open before humanity the vision of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order. The very notion of a path is, itself, indicative of the nature and purpose of the courses, for a path invites participation, it beckons to new horizons, it demands effort and movement, it accommodates different paces and strides, it is structured and defined. A path can be experienced and known, not only by one or two but by scores upon scores; it belongs to the community. To walk a path is a concept equally expressive. It requires of the individual volition and choice; it calls for a set of skills and abilities but also elicits certain qualities and attitudes; it necessitates a logical progression but admits, when needed, related lines of exploration; it may seem easy at the outset but becomes more challenging further along. And crucially, one walks the path in the company of others.

At present the main sequence consists of eight courses, though it is understood there may eventually be as many as eighteen that will address acts of service related to such requirements as coordination and administration, social action and involvement in the discourses of society. There are currently two points along the sequence at which an individual may choose to follow a specialized path of service. The first appears at Book 3. From among the friends who complete it and begin to offer a relatively simple class for children in the first grade of a programme for their spiritual education, a percentage will want to dedicate themselves to this field of service, pursuing in time a series of progressively more complex branch courses for teaching Grades 2 to 6. This does not mean that they will abandon study of the

main sequence. Indeed, courses that make up a specialized path of service anticipate that participants are continuing to progress, each at a pace suitable to his or her situation, along the path traced out by the main sequence. Book 5, which seeks to raise up animators of junior youth groups, constitutes the second point at which a series of courses branch out.

Additional avenues of exploration will no doubt appear along the main sequence in due time. Some may be of universal interest, such as the two mentioned above, while others may be limited to specific local needs. As with the main sequence itself, content and structure must emerge out of continued collective experience in the field, an experience that is not haphazard or subject to the forces of personal preference but is guided by the institutions of the Faith. The generation of such an experience will call for a still greater infusion of energy from a much larger portion of the population, and it would be premature, in all but a few places, for institutes to give attention to the creation or implementation of other branch courses at this juncture in the unfoldment of the current series of global Plans.

Coordination

Clearly, the approach to capacity building described above represents an attempt to achieve a certain dynamics within a population that brings together service and the generation of knowledge and its diffusion, a subject which we discussed, albeit briefly, in our Riḍván 2010 message. Here we address a few practical considerations, which the emergence of the two aforementioned specialized paths of service has made all the more relevant.

At any given moment it is possible to view from one of two perspectives what occurs in a cluster as the pattern of action promoted by the Five Year Plan, through which is woven the fabric of a vibrant community life, gathers in strength. Both perspectives are equally valid; each offers a particular way of thinking and speaking about what is taking place. From one perspective an educational process with three distinct stages appears in sharp relief: the first for the youngest members of the community, the second for those in the challenging transitional years, and the third for youth and adults. In this context, one speaks of three educational imperatives, each distinguished by its own methods and materials, each claiming a share of resources, and each served by mechanisms to systematize experience and to generate knowledge based on insights gained in the field. Quite naturally, then, three discussions take shape around the implementation of the programme for the spiritual education of children, the junior youth spiritual

empowerment programme, and the main sequence of courses.

From another perspective one thinks in terms of the three-month cycles of activity through which a community grows—the burst of expansion experienced as a result of intense action; the necessary period of consolidation during which increases in ranks are fortified as they, for example, participate in devotional gatherings and the Nineteen Day Feast and receive visits at their homes; and the opportunities designated for all to reflect and plan. The question of teaching among receptive populations moves to the foreground in this light, and the challenge of seeking out souls who are willing to engage in a conversation about the world around them and participate in a collective effort to transform it comes into focus.

It is especially at the level of coordination that it proves indispensable to step back and view from these two vantage points what is essentially one reality. Doing so makes it possible to analyse accurately, to assess strategically, to allocate wisely, and to avoid fragmentation. At this point, then, early in the execution of the Plan, it seems more vital than ever for attention to be devoted to the issue of coordination. Though the basic elements of an effective organizational scheme are already well understood, the form it should assume under diverse circumstances is in need of articulation. We have asked the International Teaching Centre to follow efforts made in this direction, particularly in the several hundred furthest advanced clusters worldwide, in order to effect the rapid systematization of lessons learned.

In all such clusters, where the demands of large-scale growth are asserting themselves, each stage of the educational process promoted by the training institute must receive added support. The work of the coordinator should be reinforced by assistance from a growing number of experienced individuals, and meetings for the exchange of information and insights become regular and more systematic in approach. So, too, must periodic occasions be created for the three coordinators appointed by the institute—or, where applicable, teams of coordinators concerned with study circles, junior youth groups and children's classes respectively—to examine together the strength of the educational process as a whole. And they, in turn, should meet on a regular basis with the Area Teaching Committee. Further, if an adequate flow of information, guidance and much-needed funds is to reach the cluster, a parallel set of steps will have to be taken by the board of the institute to enhance the functioning of that agency at the regional level. Where such a mature scheme of coordination is brought into place, the Auxiliary Board members and their assistants will be able to provide support

across all areas of action with even greater effectiveness.

One final point merits reflection in this respect. Nearly all of the several hundred clusters under consideration are associated with one or another of some forty sites for the dissemination of learning established by the Office of Social and Economic Development at the World Centre in response to the overwhelming demand for the junior youth programme experienced throughout the world. Institutes operating in these clusters have already benefited over the past year from knowledge gained through the sites, particularly in relation to coordination of the programme. Without question, the capacity to sustain scores of junior youth groups lent a powerful impetus to the progress of all such clusters and contributed decisively to the subsequent development of study circles and children's classes. Sites supported by the Office of Social and Economic Development will continue to assist training institutes in addressing the complex set of questions arising out of the implementation of a programme for an age group whose enormous potential must remain the object of ongoing exploration. We look to the institutes themselves, however, to foster the learning process necessary to manage large numbers of children's classes and study circles, to put in place a scheme at the cluster level that will strengthen coordination across their three defined areas of action, and to open the flow of resources from the regional level into the grassroots—this, to ensure the seamless progression of sizeable contingents from one stage of the educational process to the next and to facilitate the steady unfoldment of cycles of activity so essential to systematic growth.

Classes for children

Among the range of questions now before every training institute one stands out as particularly pressing: how to mobilize sufficient numbers of children's class teachers for successive grades and, by extension, tutors who can form groups to study the requisite courses. The units that comprise the three books currently available contain both materials for study by teachers and lessons for children, allowing institutes to establish without delay the first three grades of a six-year programme. To raise up an initial corps of teachers for these grades, they may well have to employ temporary measures. A good scheme of coordination, built incrementally in keeping with demands on the ground, should make it possible to respond to exigencies with a degree of flexibility while maintaining the integrity of the overall educational process in the long term.

Besides the systematic training of teachers for successive grades, institutes will

need to learn about the formation of classes for distinct age groups in villages and neighbourhoods; the provision of teachers for various classes; the retention of students year after year, grade after grade; and the continued progress of children from a wide variety of households and backgrounds—in short, the establishment of an expanding, sustainable system for child education that will keep pace with both the growing concern among parents for their youngsters to develop sound moral structures and the rise in human resources in the community. The task, while immense, is relatively straightforward, and we urge institutes everywhere to give it the attention which it so clearly deserves, focusing especially on the implementation of the first three grades of the programme and remembering that the quality of the teaching-learning experience depends, to a great extent, on the capabilities of the teacher.

A word of caution seems to be in order. It is certainly not incorrect to speak of "training" children's class teachers or, for that matter, animators of junior youth groups. Institutes, however, ought to take care, lest they begin to perceive their work as training in techniques, losing sight of the conception of capacity building at the heart of the institute process that entails a profound understanding of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.

Educational materials

In light of the foregoing paragraphs, the question of educational materials specifically as they pertain to children's classes and to junior youth groups has to be considered. With regard to the former, we explained in our Riḍván 2010 message that the lessons prepared by the Ruhi Institute would constitute the core of a programme for the spiritual education of children, around which secondary elements could be organized. Whether or not any additional elements are required to reinforce the educational process for each grade would generally be determined by teachers themselves, on the basis of specific circumstances, not infrequently in consultation with the institute coordinator at the cluster level. It is assumed that, if found to be appropriate, any additional items would be selected from resources readily available. There will seldom be cause to formalize the use of such items, whether directly through their adoption by training institutes or indirectly through their widespread systematic promotion.

In the case of junior youth groups, a similar approach is encouraged by the Office of Social and Economic Development. The core of the programme consists of a

series of textbooks studied by the groups. We understand that, at present, seven of a projected eighteen textbooks, exploring a range of themes from a Bahá'í perspective, though not in the mode of religious instruction, are available. These form the major component of a three-year programme. Another nine textbooks will provide a distinctly Bahá'í component, and two of these are currently in use. Animators are advised to complement study with artistic activities and service projects. As with children's class teachers, the institute coordinator at the cluster level can offer animators assistance in determining how to proceed. Yet, most often, such projects and activities are selected by the junior youth themselves, in light of their own circumstances and inclinations, in consultation with the group's animator.

In all such matters, those serving as teachers and animators alike are called upon to exercise discretion. Education is a vast field, and educational theories abound. Surely many have considerable merit, but it should be remembered that none is free of assumptions about the nature of the human being and society. An educational process should, for example, create in a child awareness of his or her potentialities, but the glorification of self has to be scrupulously avoided. So often in the name of building confidence the ego is bolstered. Similarly, play has its place in the education of the young. Children and junior youth, however, have proven time and again their capacity to engage in discussions on abstract subjects, undertaken at a level appropriate to their age, and derive great joy from the serious pursuit of understanding. An educational process that dilutes content in a mesmerizing sea of entertainment does them no service. We trust that, in studying the institute courses, teachers and animators will find themselves increasingly equipped to make judicious decisions in selecting any materials or activities necessary, whether from traditional educational sources or from the wealth of items, such as songs, stories, and games, that are sure to be developed for the young in the Bahá'í community in the years to come.

Propelled by forces generated both within and outside the Bahá'í community, the peoples of the earth can be seen to be moving from divergent directions, closer and closer to one another, towards what will be a world civilization so stupendous in character that it would be futile for us to attempt to imagine it today. As this centripetal movement of populations accelerates across the globe, some elements in every culture, not in accord with the teachings of the Faith, will gradually fall away, while others will be reinforced. By the same token, new elements of culture will evolve over time as people hailing from every human group, inspired by the

Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, give expression to patterns of thought and action engendered by His teachings, in part through artistic and literary works. It is with such considerations in mind that we welcome the decision of the Ruhi Institute, in formulating its courses, to leave for the friends to address locally issues related to artistic activity. What we ask at this stage, then, when energies are to be invested in the extension of children's classes and junior youth groups, is that the multiplication of supplementary items for this purpose be allowed to occur naturally, as an outgrowth of the process of community building gathering momentum in villages and neighbourhoods. We long to see, for instance, the emergence of captivating songs from every part of the world, in every language, that will impress upon the consciousness of the young the profound concepts enshrined in the Bahá'í teachings. Yet such an efflorescence of creative thought will fail to materialize, should the friends fall, however inadvertently, into patterns prevalent in the world that give licence to those with financial resources to impose their cultural perspective on others, inundating them with materials and products aggressively promoted. Further, every effort should be made to protect spiritual education from the perils of commercialization. The Ruhi Institute itself has explicitly discouraged the proliferation of products and items that treat its identity as a brand to be marketed. We hope that the friends will respect its diligence in this matter.

In this connection, ***it gives us pleasure to inform you that we have created an International Advisory Board to assist the Ruhi Institute in overseeing its system for the preparation, production, and distribution of materials,*** *the content and structure of which now draw extensively on Bahá'í experience worldwide in applying the teachings and principles of the Faith to the life of humanity. As it gradually takes up its work, the Board will be able to respond to related issues and follow the development of supplementary materials that are aligned with the direction set by the global Plans.*

In closing, we feel compelled to address a few words to training institutes throughout the world: It should be remembered that the Bahá'í children's class teacher and the junior youth group animator, entrusted with so much responsibility for strengthening the moral foundations of the community, will, in most places, be a young person in his or her teens. Increasingly these young people will emerge, it can be expected, from the junior youth spiritual empowerment programme imbued with a strong twofold purpose, both to develop their inherent potentialities and to contribute to the transformation of society. But they may also

> *come from any one of a number of educational backgrounds with all the hope in their hearts that, through strenuous concerted effort, the world will change. Irrespective of particulars, they will, one and all, share in the desire to dedicate their time and energy, talents and abilities, to service to their communities. Many, when given the opportunity, will gladly devote a few years of their lives to the provision of spiritual education to the rising generations. In the young people of the world, then, lies a reservoir of capacity to transform society waiting to be tapped. And the release of this capacity should be regarded by every institute as a sacred charge.*
>
> *[signed: The Universal House of Justice]*

Comments

December 12. On this date in 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote "At all times we must look at the greatness of the Cause, and remember that Bahá'u'lláh will assist all who arise in His service. When we look at ourselves, we are sure to feel discouraged by our shortcomings and insignificance!"

Original file: 0529.html (position #107)

December 12. On this date in 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote "At all times we must look at the greatness of the Cause, and remember that Bahá'u'lláh will assist all who arise in His service. When we look at ourselves, we are sure to feel discouraged by our shortcomings and insignificance!"

> *1977. At all times we must look at the greatness of the Cause, and remember that*

Bahá'u'lláh will assist all who arise in His service. When we look at ourselves, we are sure to feel discouraged by our shortcomings and insignificance!

(From a letter dated 12 December 1950 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)

Comments

December 12. On this date in 1971, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum arrived in Matadi, Zaïre, during one of her many travels, as documented in Violette Nakhjavani's "The Great Safari of Hand of the Cause Rúhíyyih Khánum".

Original file: 0528.html (position #106)

December 12. On this date in 1971, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum arrived in Matadi, Zaïre, during one of her many travels, as documented in Violette Nakhjavani's *The Great Safari of Hand of the Cause Rúhíyyih Khánum*. From Shoghi Effendi's death in 1957 until her own death in 2000, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum traveled to over 185 countries and territories.

> *Almost two years after the "Rabbani African Safari" had crossed from Uganda into Congo Kinshasa, as it was then called, and more than a thousand miles had been traversed through that country and through the Central African Republic, Chad and Niger, now we two, with the Land Rover were set ashore at the port of Matadi, again in Congo Kinshasa, but now the country had a new name, Zaïre,*

both more descriptive and beautiful. We arrived on December 12, 1971, and as the boat was approaching the dock we could see a small group of friends holding up a large poster of welcome. The Bahá'ís who had come to meet us included the only Bahá'í of Matadi and three Bahá'ís of Kinshasa who had waited for us two days, uncertain of the time our cargo boat was expected to arrive. The little band eagerly looked for the face of their beloved Hand of the Cause, Rúḥíyyih Khánum.

Through the help of the Matadi Bahá'í who happened to be working in the Customs office, we were able to get the car and ourselves cleared within a short time. Then began the overland journey of 2,500 miles which took us across the country from west to south-east in a period of seven weeks, visiting Bahá'ís in twenty-six centers. Amatu'l-Bahá addressed almost 3,000 Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís during this period in over thirty-eight meetings, representing over eighty localities. Some of the friends walked over fifty kilometers to meet Amatu'l-Bahá, such was their enthusiasm, and many of these were mothers each with a baby tied to her back.

The Kinshasa community, containing many young people, had the privilege and joy of meeting with Rúḥíyyih Khánum and listening to her words of love and wisdom at a day-long conference where over forty-five Bahá'ís had gathered from different localities in this immense city. Amatu'l-Bahá spoke at length about the beloved Guardian's trip to their country in 1940 during World War II, when they had traversed it from south to north. She recalled that this particular African country had always attracted him and visiting it had made him happy.

The questions the friends asked both in cities and villages revealed the depth of their knowledge of the Teachings and their deep love for the Faith. For example, in this Kinshasa conference one of the friends asked: "What is the meaning of 'the Sun of Bahá has set?'." He was referring to the cable 'Abdu'l-Bahá had sent to the Bahá'ís after the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh. Rúḥíyyih Khánum explained: "This refers to the Sun of the physical existence of Bahá'u'lláh on this earth and not to the Sun of His Dispensation, as that Sun will shine for at least a thousand years."

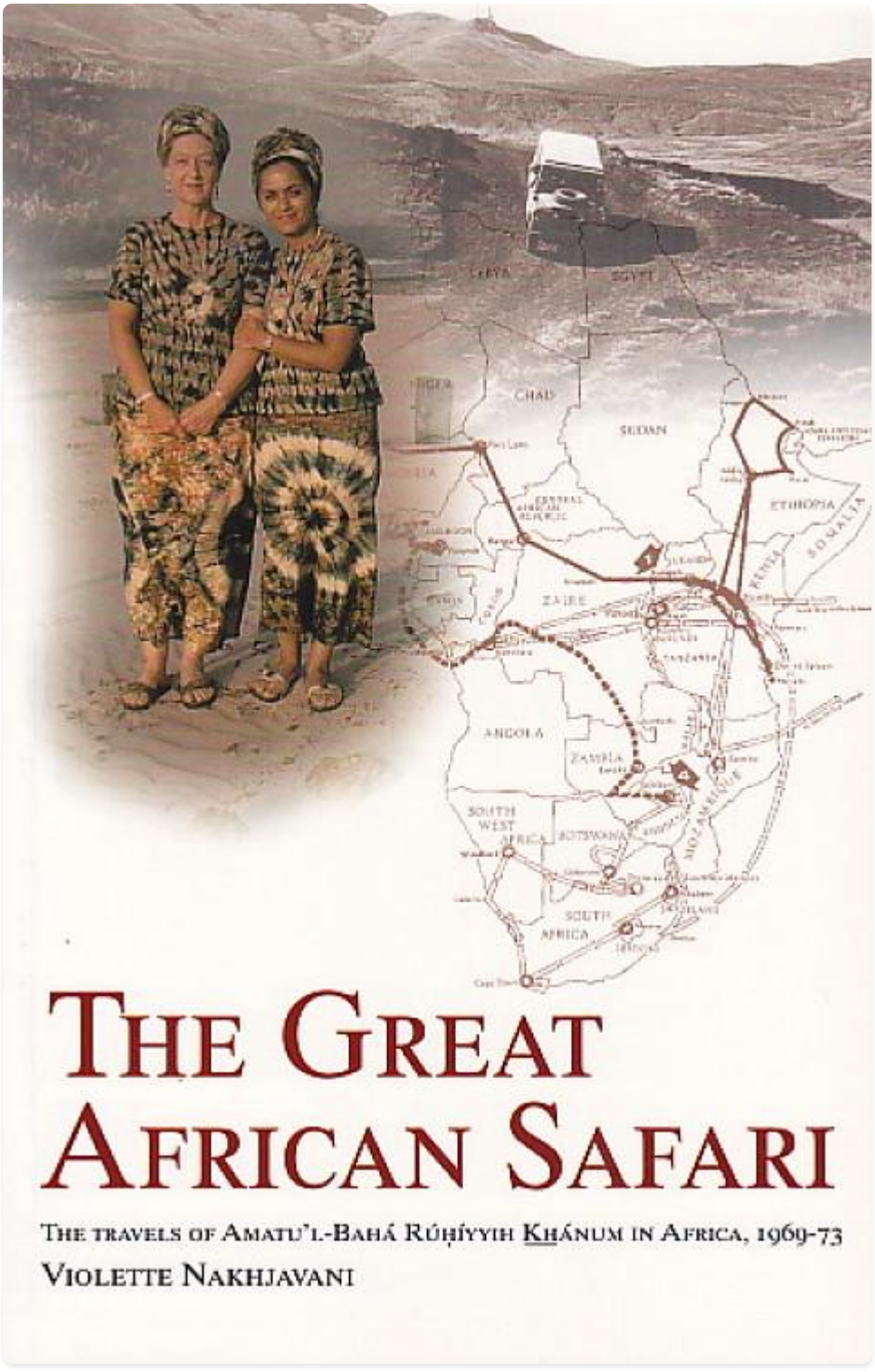
At the end of our ten-day stay in Kinshasa, once again Rúḥíyyih Khánum met with the Bahá'ís in the home of one of the pioneers where over fifty believers were present. She strongly emphasized the duty of the friends to go out and teach as well as to participate in the activities of their community, especially since they had just received permission to hold meetings in the Province of Kinshasa.

During Rúḥíyyih Khánum's stay in the capital she was received by the Minister of Information. Unfortunately, the President was touring the Provinces during the entire period of her visit so it was impossible for her to meet him, but the interview with the Minister of Information unlocked the doors of publicity. Now, for the first time, the Faith was openly and widely proclaimed in the press as well as on television and radio. Because of past events, Zaïre is necessarily vigilant; without approval from high officials of the government, the publicity which Rúḥíyyih Khánum received would have been impossible.

The Minister was an extremely polished and charming gentleman and received Amatu'l-Bahá, Dr. Navidi and myself with great courtesy. Amatu'l-Bahá told him of our long journey by Land Rover, pointing out that this was the greatest compliment two women could pay to Africa and its people. She also voiced some of her ideas on the spiritual destiny of Africa. He was visibly impressed and said that he himself would arrange for a press conference. He also presented each of us with a beautiful set of voice records of some of the most important public speeches of President Mabutos.

The press conference the Minister arranged was attended by over forty people and the words of Rúḥíyyih Khánum were recorded for both national radio and television programs. A number of favorable newspaper and magazine articles were published, not only in the capital but also in the larger newspapers of some of the Provinces.

In a teachers' training college in Ngiri Ngiri, Amatu'l-Bahá spoke to over 450 students and teachers on the much appreciated subject "The Spiritual Destiny of Africa." Two young men reporters for the school magazine had a long and interesting interview with Rúḥíyyih Khánum and were keenly interested in the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.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SOUTH AFRICA
THE GREAT AFRICAN SAFARI
THE TRAVELS OF AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚḤÍYYIH KHÁNUM IN AFRICA, 1969-73
VIOLETTE NAKHJAVANI

Comments

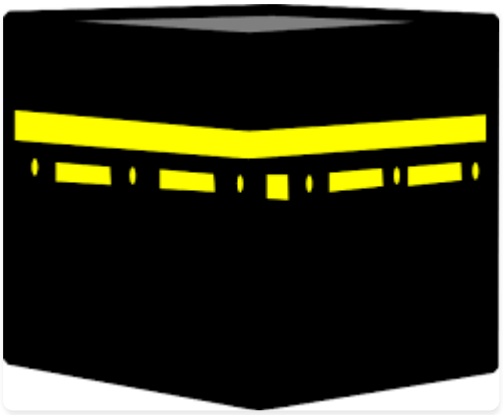
December 12. On this date in 1844, corresponding to the 1st of Dhu'l-Hijjah in the Hijri calendar, the Báb entered Mecca with his stalwart companion Quddús and an Ethiopian slave named Mubárak, and in front of the Kaaba declared himself the Qāʾim.

Original file: 0527.html (position #105)

December 12. On this date in 1844, corresponding to the 1st of Dhu'l-Hijjah in the Hijri calendar, the Báb entered Mecca with his stalwart companion Quddús and an Ethiopian slave named Mubárak, and in front of the Kaaba declared himself the Qāʾim. One can only speculate how the other Muslim pilgrims viewed this group and their proclamation. The Báb and his followers would go on to lead violent insurrections throughout Iran.

Nineteen years later, Bahá'u'lláh entered Edirne after having lived in Baghdad and Istanbul subsequent to his exile from Iran along with the other Bábi leadership in the aftermath of the unsuccessful assassination attempt of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar by some Bábis. Bahá'u'lláh would spend over four years there where, among other activities, he publicly

made his claim to be *Him whom God shall make manifest* and sent letters addressing several world leaders. Due to internecine violence between the followers of Bahá'u'lláh and Subh-i-Azal, including attempted assassinations of their leaders, the two would be sent to Acre, Palestine and Famagusta, Cyprus. Bahá'u'lláh continued his religious mission while in Palestine, where he resided in luxury in such abodes as the Mansion of Bahji and house of Mazra'ih.



Comments

December 13. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi received a letter from the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs stating "I am pleased to inform you of my decision to establish in our Ministry a separate Department for the Bahá'í Faith. I hope that this department will be of assistance to you..."

Original file: 0526.html (position #104)

December 13. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi received a letter from the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs, addressed to "His Eminence, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, World Head of the Bahá'í Faith" stating "I am pleased to inform you of my decision to establish in our Ministry a separate Department for the Bahá'í Faith. I hope that this department will be of assistance to you in matters concerning the Bahá'í Centre in our State."

In the chapter titled *The Heart and Nerve Centre* in her book *The Guardian of the Bahá'í*

Faith, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum refers to this letter...

> *In January 1949 Mr. Ben Gurion, the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, came to Haifa on his first official visit and the Mayor naturally invited Shoghi Effendi to attend the reception being given in his honour by the Municipality. The dilemma was acute, for if the Guardian did not go, it would, with every reason, be taken as an affront to the new Government, and if he did go he would inevitably be submerged in a sea of people where any pretence at protocol would be swept away (this was indeed the case, as my father, Shoghi Effendi's representative, reported after he returned from this reception). The Guardian therefore decided that as he would not be attending, but was more than willing to show courtesy to the Prime Minister of the new State, he would call upon him in person. With great difficulty this was arranged through the good offices of the Mayor of Haifa, Shabatay Levy, as Mr. Ben Gurion's time in Haifa was very short and it was only two days before the first general election in the new State.*
>
> *The interview took place on Friday evening, January 21st, in the private home the Prime Minister was staying in on Mt. Carmel and lasted about fifteen minutes. Ben Gurion enquired about the Faith and Shoghi Effendi's relation to it and asked if there was a book he could read; Shoghi Effendi answered his questions and assured him he would send him a copy of his own book God Passes By — which he later did, and which was acknowledged with thanks. Typical of the whole history of the Cause and the constant problems that beset it was a long article which appeared in the leading English-language newspaper on December 20, 1948, in which, in the most favourable terms, its teachings were set forth and the station of Shoghi Effendi as its World Head mentioned. On January 28, 1949, there appeared in the letter column of this paper a short and extraordinary statement, signed "Bahai U.N. Observer", which flatly refuted the article and asserted, "Mr. Rabbani is not the Guardian of the Bahai faith, nor its World Leader" and gave the New History Society in New York as a source of further information*
>
> *As there was no such thing as a "Bahai U.N. Observer" this move was plainly inspired by the once-more hopeful band of old Covenant-breakers, who sought, at the outset of a new regime, to blacken Shoghi Effendi's reputation and divert attention from his station by referring to Ahmad Sohrab's rootless group in America. At a later date, when in 1952 the Covenant-breakers in Bahji brought their case in the local courts against Shoghi Effendi for the demolition of an old*

building near the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh, Sohrab sought, unsuccessfully, to bring pressure on the Minister of Religious Affairs to discredit the Bahá'í claims. It was with attacks such as this, both open and covert, that the Guardian, on the threshold of a new phase in the development of the affairs of the Faith at its World Centre, once more had to content.

It had long been the desire of Shoghi Effendi to obtain control of the Mansion at Mazra'ih, where Bahá'u'lláh had first lived when He quitted once-for-all the walls of the prison-city of 'Akka. This property was a Muslim religious endowment and had now fallen vacant. It was planned by the government to turn it into a rest home for officials. All efforts, through the departments concerned, to procure this property were unavailing until Shoghi Effendi appealed directly to Ben Gurion, explaining its significance to the Bahá'ís and his desire to have it visited by pilgrims as a place so closely associated with Bahá'u'lláh. The Prime Minister himself then intervened in the matter and it was leased to the Bahá'ís as an historic site. Shoghi Effendi proudly informed the Bahá'í world, on December 16, 1950, that its keys had been delivered to us, by the Israeli authorities, after the lapse of more than fifty years.

The affairs of the Bahá'í Community, in matters concerning its day-to-day dealings with the government in connection with the work at the World Centre, had been placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and was at first handled by the head of the Department that dealt with Muslim affairs. This Shoghi Effendi violently objected to as it implied the Faith was in some way identified with Islam. After much negotiation a letter was received from the Minister of Religious Affairs, dated December 13, 1953, addressed to "His Eminence, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, World Head of the Bahá'í Faith" in which he said:

> *"...I am pleased to inform you of my decision to establish in our Ministry a separate Department for the Bahá'í Faith. I hope that this department will be of assistance to you in matters concerning the Bahá'í Centre in our State.*
>
> *In the name of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the State of Israel, I wish to assure Your Eminence that full protection will be given to the Holy Places as well as to the World Centre of the Bahá'í Faith."*

The victory was all the more welcome, following as it did the previously

mentioned court case against Shoghi Effendi brought on a technicality by the Covenant-breakers in connection with the demolition of a house adjoining the Shrine and Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahji. Never tired of seeking to publicly humiliate and discredit the Head of the Faith, be it 'Abdu'l-Bahá or the Guardian, they had had the temerity to summon Shoghi Effendi to appear in court as a witness. Once more, greatly concerned for the honour of the Cause at its World Centre, Shoghi Effendi appealed direct to the Prime Minister, sending as his representatives the President, Secretary-General and Member-at-Large of the International Bahá'í Council (whom he had summoned from Italy for this purpose) to Jerusalem on more than one visit to press the strategy he himself had devised. These representations were successful and on the grounds of its being a purely religious issue it was removed by Government from the jurisdiction of the civil courts. As soon as the plaintiffs found their plan to humiliate Shoghi Effendi had been forestalled, they were willing to settle the case by negotiation. That the authorities and the Bahá'í Community were equally pleased by this conclusion of the matter is shown in these letters written to the Guardian by members of the Prime Minister's staff — two men to whom the Faith owed much for their sympathetic efforts on its behalf at that time:

> *PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE Jerusalem, 19th May, 1952. His Eminence Shoghi Rabbani,*
>
> *World Head of the Bahá'í Faith,*
>
> *Haifa. Your Eminence, I am instructed to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 16th May addressed to the Prime Minister. As you are no doubt aware, the dispute between yourself as the World head of the Bahá'í Faith and members of the family of the founder of the Faith has found its solution and there is no need, therefore, to take any administrative action in order to solve the problem. May I express to you our gratitude for your wise and benevolent attitude taken in the dispute which enabled us to impose a just and, as we hope, a lasting solution on the dissident group? The Prime Minister assures you of his personal esteem and sends you his best wishes.*
>
> > *Yours sincerely,*

> > *S. Eynath*
>
> > *Legal Adviser*

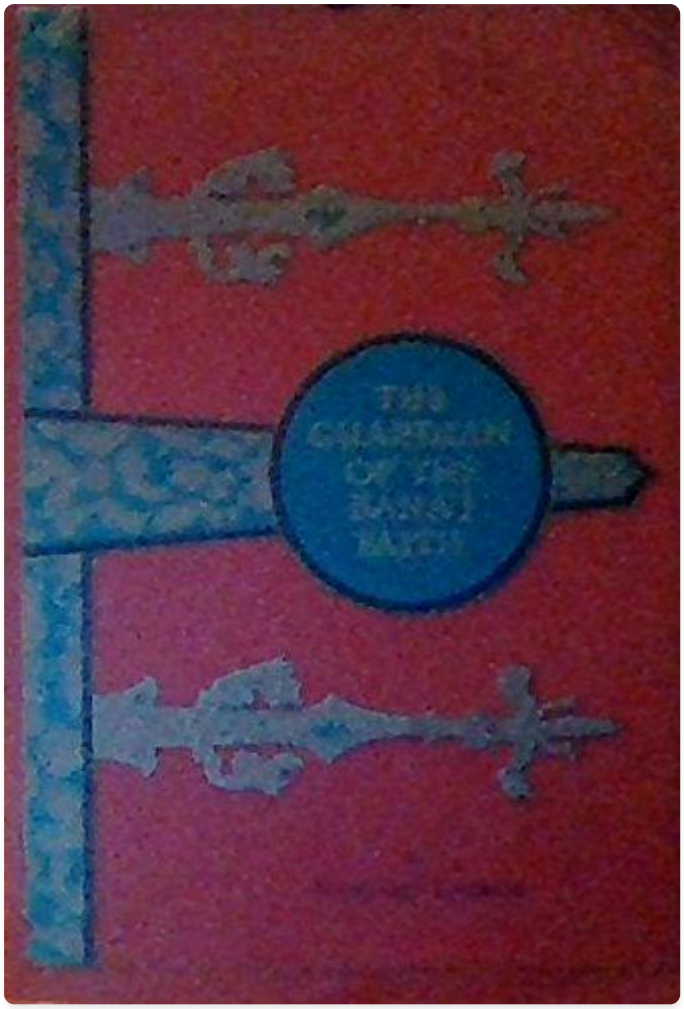
The second letter was from Walter Eytan, Director-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and was written to Shoghi Effendi the following day. In it he says: "...Having done my best throughout to be of assistance to Your Eminence in the solution of these vexing problems, I heard with great satisfaction this morning that complete agreement had been reached. I sincerely trust that this puts an end to a period of anxiety for Your Eminence and the members of the Bahá'í Faith, and that you will now be able to proceed with your plans without further interference from any quarter."

It is significant to note that they address Shoghi Effendi as "His Eminence", a title which, though still far below what his position merited, was the one that had been introduced in the earliest days of his ministry, but never really used by any officials until the formation of the Jewish State.

The cordial nature of the relations established between the Guardian and the officials of the State of Israel encouraged Shoghi Effendi to ascertain if the President would care to visit the Bahá'í Shrine in Haifa; when word was received that he would accept such an invitation, Shoghi Effendi formally invited him to do so and arrangements were made for the morning of April 26, 1954, at which time, the Director of the President's Office wrote to Shoghi Effendi, the President would "be pleased to pay you an official visit". Accordingly the President and his wife arrived at the home of the Master, attended by two officials, partook of light refreshment and were presented by the Guardian with a Persian album, painted with miniatures and bound in silver, containing some photographs of the Shrines, as a memento of their visit. The Presidential party, with Shoghi Effendi and those who accompanied him, then proceeded to the gardens on Mt. Carmel. It was the first time in the history of the Cause that the Head of an independent nation had ever made an official visit of this kind and it constituted another milestone in the development of the World Centre of the Faith. The President and his companions showed the greatest respect to the Shrine of the Bab, removing their shoes as we did, before entering it, the men keeping their hats on out of reverence as Jews for a holy place; it was a very moving moment to see President Ben Zvi standing beside

Shoghi Effendi, the former with his European hat, the latter with his simple black fez, before the threshold. After a few words of explanation from Shoghi Effendi we all withdrew and walked about he gardens for a few minutes before saying good-bye in front of the Oriental Pilgrim House where the President's car was awaiting him.

On April 29th the President wrote personally to the Guardian: "I should like to express my thanks for your kind hospitality and for the interesting time I spent with you visiting the beautiful Gardens and remarkable Shrine... I do appreciate the friendship which the Bahá'í Community has for Israel and it is my sincere hope that we may all live to see the strengthening of amity between all peoples on earth." On May 5th the Guardian replied to this letter in equally warm terms: "...It was a great pleasure to meet Your Excellency and Mrs. Ben Zvi, and be able to show you one of our places of Bahá'í pilgrimage in Israel... If it suits your convenience, Mrs. Rabbani and I, accompanied by Mr. Ioas, would like to call upon Your Excellency and Mrs. Ben Zvi in Jerusalem..." The time for this return call was set for the afternoon of May 26th and we had tea and a pleasant conversation with the President and his wife, in her own way as much a personality as her husband and equally nice. In the interim between these two visits Shoghi Effendi had sent to the President some Bahá'í books which he had promised him and these had been acknowledged with the thanks of the President and the assurance that he would read them with great interest. Ever meticulous in all matters, Shoghi Effendi wrote on June 3rd to the President: "I wish to thank you and Mrs. Ben Zvi for your kind hospitality. Mrs. Rabbani and I enjoyed our visit with you very much, and I feel sure that this opportunity we have had of visiting with you our Bahá'í Holy Places and calling upon you in the capital of Israel has served to reinforce the bonds of affection and esteem which unite the Bahá'ís to the people and Government of Israel. With kind regards to you and Mrs. Ben Zvi..." Thus ended another memorable chapter in the process of winning recognition for the Faith at its World Centre.



Comments

December 13. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote "disloyalty and dishonourable conduct of the members of the Master's Family, and now his own family. They have not only disobeyed him, and flouted his advice and instructions, but done things which are so shameful he is unable to mention..."

Original file: 0525.html (position #103)

December 13. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote a German Bahá'í about "the disloyalty and dishonourable conduct of the members of the Master's Family, and now his own family. They have not only disobeyed him, and flouted his advice and instructions, but done things which are so shameful he is unable to mention them. In view of this, he was forced in 1944, to expel Hussein--but not until he had of his own accord left the Master's house gone to the Covenant-Breakers, and refused warnings and advice alike. His heart is unrepentant, and his character greatly changed, which is surely a great tragedy."

13 December 1948 [to Miss Elsa Grossmann] He has, as a result of your letter, just cabled you via Geneva asking you to please get from Mrs ... the letter Hussein wrote her and forward it to him, as he wishes to see it.

I cannot tell you how much and how bitterly our beloved Guardian has suffered from the disloyalty and dishonourable conduct of the members of the Master's Family, and now his own family. They have not only disobeyed him, and flouted his advice and instructions, but done things which are so shameful he is unable to mention them. In view of this, he was forced in 1944, to expel Hussein--but not until he had of his own accord left the Master's house gone to the Covenant-Breakers, and refused warnings and advice alike. His heart is unrepentant, and his character greatly changed, which is surely a great tragedy.

He was very pleased to hear you were able to visit the Bahá'í convention in Hamburg, and that you found the believers there so enthusiastic and devoted. There is a tremendous amount of work to be done everywhere, and such active and tireless workers, as you and your dear family, are needed urgently in every direction!

He most deeply values your loyalty, your devotion and your services. You may be sure he will pray for you in the Holy Shrines and for your family and dear Mrs Benke....

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Dear and valued co-worker:

I deeply and increasingly appreciate the spirit that animates you, and wish to assure you of my abiding appreciation of your exemplary loyalty, your perseverance and splendid services to our glorious Faith. Persevere in your manifold and meritorious activities, and rest assured that the Beloved is well pleased with the standard of your accomplishments,

Your true and grateful brother,

Shoghi

On April 15, 1945, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram announcing "Faithless brother Husayn, after long period of dishonourable conduct, has abandoned the Master's home to consort with his sister and other Covenant-breakers." Shoghi Effendi would later chide Husayn for marrying a "lowbornChristian girl."

In March 1950, Shoghi Effendi would send a further cable: "Faithless brother Hussein, already abased through dishonorable conduct over period (of) years followed by association with Covenant-breakers (in) Holy Land and efforts (to) undermine Guardian's position, recently further demeaned himself through marriage under obscure circumstances with **low born Christian girl** (in) Europe." Shoghi Effendi would later defend the use of the term "lowborn Christian girl" as follows: "Regarding his cable concerning Hussein: he has been very surprised to note that the terms 'low-born Christian girl ' and 'disgraceful alliance' should arouse any question; it seems to him that the friends should realize it is not befitting for the Guardian's own brother, the grandchild of the Master, an Afnán and Aghsán mentioned in the Will and Testament of the Master, and of whom so much was expected because of his relation to the family of the Prophet, to marry an unknown girl, according to goodness knows what rite, who is not a believer at all."

Comments

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Original file: 0524.html (position #102)

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In the Guardian's own handwriting:

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Comments

December 13. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi sent a cable titled "Old and New Covenant-Breakers" noting "increasing boldness, marked, tragic decline in character and spiritual condition grandchildren 'Abdu'l-Bahá."

Original file: 0523.html (position #101)

December 13. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi sent a cable titled "Old and New Covenant-Breakers" noting "increasing boldness, marked, tragic decline in character and spiritual condition grandchildren 'Abdu'l-Bahá."

> *Old and New Covenant-Breakers*
>
> *With feeling profound concern, grief, indignation, am compelled disclose Bahá'í world recent developments Holy Land furnishing further incontestable proof relationship established old and new* **Covenant-breakers** *demonstrating increasing boldness, marked, tragic decline in character and spiritual condition* **grandchildren 'Abdu'l-Bahá**. *Their shameful attitude and conduct receiving approbation their elders. Evidences multiplying attesting* **Ruhi's** *increasing rebelliousness, efforts*

> *exerted* **my eldest sister** *pave way fourth alliance members family Siyyid 'Alí involving marriage his granddaughter with* **Ruha's** *son and personal contact recently established my own treacherous, despicable brother* **Riaz** *with Majdi'd-Din, redoubtable enemy Faith, former henchman* **Muhammad-'Ali,** *Archbreaker Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant. Convey information all National Assemblies.*
>
> *--Shoghi*
>
> *[Cablegram, December, 13, 1951]*

Less than two years later, on May 17, 1953, Shoghi Effendi addressed a cablegram to the Bahá'ís of the word, condemning his one-time close companion, secretary, and first cousin as "treacherous Ruhi Afnan."

Shoghi Effendi's eldest cousin and close friend, Ruhi Afnan accompanied him for rest and relaxation in the Bernese Oberland in the Swiss Alps on April 5, 1922, some four months after returning to Haifa subsequent to the death of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,

> *Treacherous Ruhi Afnan*
>
> *Treacherous* **Ruhi Afnan,** *not content with previous disobedience, correspondence with* **Ahmad Sohrab,** *contact with* **old Covenant-breakers,** *sale, in conjunction with other members of family, of sacred property purchased by Founder of Faith, and allowing* **his sister** *to marry* **son of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's enemy,** *is now openly lecturing on Bahá'í movement, claiming to be its exponent and is misrepresenting the teachings and deliberately causing confusion in minds of authorities and the local population. Inform National Assemblies.*

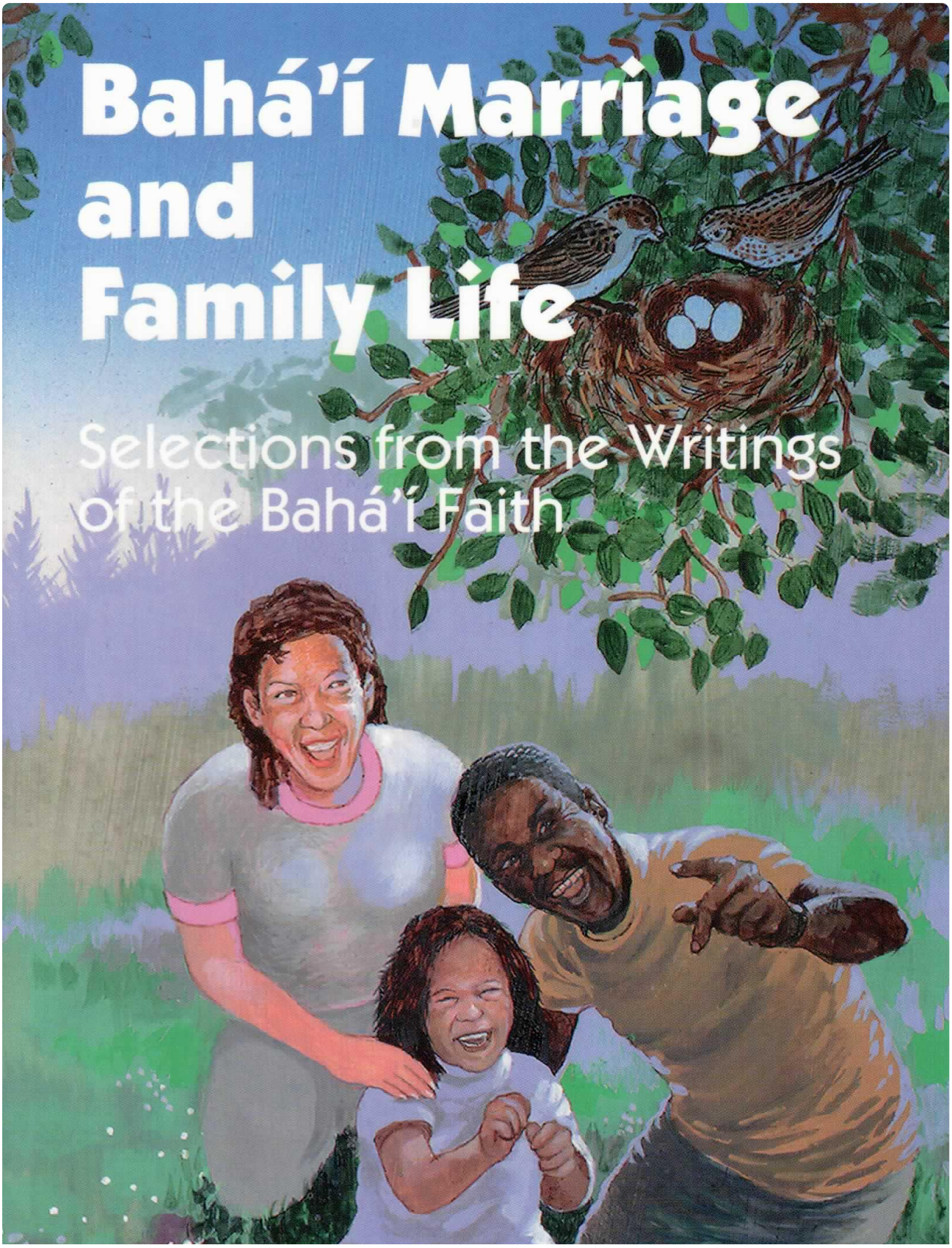
Comments

December 13. On this date in 1940, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Bahá'í youth should...be advised, nay even encouraged, to contract marriage while still young and in full possession of their physical vigour."

December 13. On this date in 1940, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Bahá'í youth should...be advised, nay even encouraged, to contract marriage while still young and in full possession of their physical vigour."

> *1214. Youth Should Be Taught Self-Control*
>
> *"...The Bahá'í youth should, on the one hand, be taught the lesson of self-control which, when exercised, undoubtedly has a salutary effect on the development of character and of personality in general, and on the other should be advised, nay even encouraged, to contract marriage while still young and in full possession of their physical vigour. Economic factors, no doubt, are often a serious hindrance to early marriage but in most cases are only an excuse, and as such should not be over stressed."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer,*

> *December 13, 1940: Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1968-1973, p. 109)*



Comments

December 13. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the very nature of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, has been vouchsafed to man through institutions in this world; namely the Guardianship at present; and also in the future, the International House of Justice."

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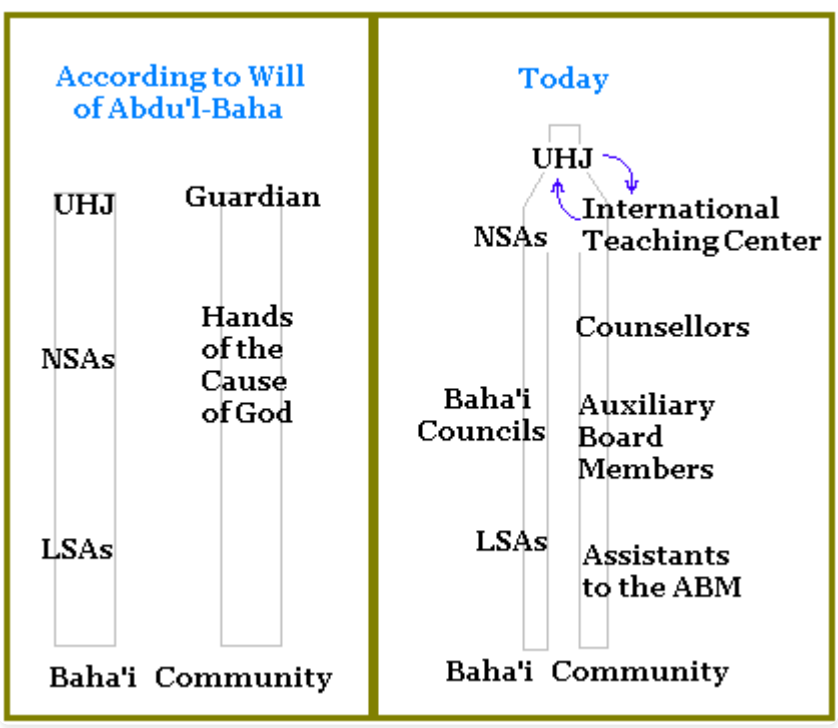
> *1053. God Ordained, in This Day, that Guidance Has Been Vouchsafed to Man Through Institutions*
>
> *"...In view of the fact that guidance in this day, through the bounty of God, and because of the very nature of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, has been vouchsafed to man*

> *through institutions in this world; namely the Guardianship at present; and also in the future, the International House of Justice; individuals are not in a position to interpret the Teachings, and have no justification for claiming special stations."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, December 13, 1955)*



Comments

December 13. On this date in 2008, three of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Stamford, one in Dallas, and one in Los Angeles.

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Universal House of Justice member Peter Khan would later give a talk on July 3, 2009, later published as "Reflections on the Ridvan 2009 Message," stating,

> *As you are, I am sure, aware, that series of conferences had a galvanizing effect on the Bahá'í Community throughout the world and ultimately on the larger society. It was a tangible demonstration of the global spread of the Faith and it created a most welcome surge toward the goal of 1500 Intensive Programs of Growth by the end of the present plan.*

How does membership in the International Teaching Centre lead to election to the Universal House of Justice?

How is it that with its nine members elected every five years from the male membership in

good standing of the worldwide Bahá'í community by an electoral college consisting of all the members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly throughout the world, the membership of the Universal House of Justice consists exclusively of men who have previously been appointed to the International Teaching Centre by the Universal House of Justice?

With no overt campaigning or politicking permitted, upon what does the electoral college base its election of new members to the Universal House of Justice?

In the Bahá'í electoral system, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. Members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice.

Consider the cases of Stephen Birkland and Stephen Hall. Stephen Birkland was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2008 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010. Stephen Hall was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2005 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010.

In a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

In that period, Stephen Birkland attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 1-2, 2008	Lusaka, Zambia
November 8-9, 2008	Johannesburg, South Africa
November 29-30, 2008	Antofagasta, Chile
December 6-7, 2008	Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America
January 17-18, 2009	Vancouver, Canada
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
February 21-22, 2009	Accra, Ghana

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Birkland"

In that period, Stephen Hall attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 15-16, 2008	Bangui, Central African Republic
November 22-23, 2008	Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo
November 29-30, 2008	Yaoundé, Cameroon
December 6-7, 2008	Portland, Oregon, United States of America
December 13-14, 2008	Stamford, Connecticut, United States of America
January 3-4, 2009	Abidjan, Ivory Coast
January 17-18, 2009	Lae, Papua New Guinea
January 24-25, 2009	Sydney, Australia
January 31-February 1, 2009	Auckland, New Zealand
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Hall"

No other Bahá'ís receive as much exposure to electors of the Universal House of Justice as do members of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual

election to the Universal House of Justice.

When the Universal House of Justice appoints members to the International Teaching Centre, they are in fact selecting their own replacements.

In the Bahá'í electoral system, with no overt campaigning and politicking permitted, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. The nine members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice. In fact, every single one of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

To illustrate further, in a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

Each of the 41 Regional Conferences was attended by two Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre with the exception of the Conference held at Uvira, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which had only one representative. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre at the time of the Regional Conferences were Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, Stephen Birkland, Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker.

Of this cohort of Counsellors, the five lady members (Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker) were ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice.

Of the four male members at the time of the 41 Regional Conferences (Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, and Stephen Birkland), all have been elected to the Universal House of Justice.

In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. In the people's democracies of the Eastern Bloc, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

The next member elected to the Universal House of Justice will be Andrej Donoval, who is the longest tenured male member of the International Teaching Centre, having been appointed to that body in 2013.

Comments

December 13. On this date in 1990, the UHJ's Research Department published a Memorandum addressing Bahá'í interpretations of the prophecies contained in Daniel 12:11-12 and modifications made to John Esslemont's "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era" subsequent to the failure of these prophecies.

Original file: 0519.html (position #97)

December 13. On this date in 1990, the Universal House of Justice's Research Department published a Memorandum addressing Bahá'í interpretations of the prophecies contained in Daniel 12:11-12 and modifications made to John Esslemont's "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era" subsequent to the failure of these prophecies.

http://bahai-library.com/uhj_prophecy_daniel_esslemont

Prophecy of Daniel; Modifications of Baha'u'llah and the New Era by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice 1996-06-02 Mr. .... Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Your email of 8 May 1996 regarding questions raised about the fulfilment of the Biblical prophecy of Daniel concerning 1,335 days, as well as modifications made to "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era", was referred to us for response. In answer to earlier, similar questions on these subjects, memoranda were prepared by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice. Copies of these are enclosed.

It is our hope that these will be helpful to you in responding to the questions which have been raised.

With loving Bahá'í greetings, Department of the Secretariat Enclosures (appended) M E M O R A N D U M To: The Universal House of Justice Date: 13 December 1990 From: Research Department

DANIEL'S PROPHECIES Revised February 1996 From time to time, questions are raised by the Bahá'ís about the interpretation of the Biblical prophecies contained in the following verses in Daniel 12:11-12: And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

To assist the friends in their study of this subject, the Research Department has prepared a summary of the elucidations contained in the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá and the letters written by or on behalf of Shoghi Effendi on this theme. Three main issues are addressed: the interpretation of 1,290 days; the interpretation of 1,335 days; and the date of the commencement of the "hundred lunar years", which, as mentioned by Shoghi Effendi in "God Passes By" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987), page 151, will precede the consummation of the 1,335 days. 1. 1,290 Days

In "Some Answered Questions" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1984), pages 43-44, Abdu'l-Bahá interprets the prophecy concerning the 1,290 days in the following terms:

The beginning of this lunar reckoning is from the day of the proclamation of the prophethood of Muhammad in the country of Hijaz; and that was three years after His mission, because in the beginning the prophethood of Muhammad was kept secret, and no one knew it save Khadijah and Ibn Nawfal. After three years it was announced. And Bahá'u'lláh, in the year 1290 from the proclamation of the mission of Muhammad, caused His manifestation to be known. Note that the Master indicates that, in this instance, time is

measured by the "lunar" calendar. Since the proclamation of the mission of Muhammad took place ten years prior to the Hegira, i.e., His flight from Mecca to Medina, from which date the Muslim calendar begins, the year 1290 from the proclamation of the mission of Muhammad was the year 1280 of the Hegira, or 1863-64 A.D. There are references to 1,290 days in "God Passes By", on pages 110 and 151. In these passages, Shoghi Effendi confirms that the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad, which occurred in 1863 (1280 A.H.), represents the fulfilment of the 1,290 days.

Daniel's Prophecies Revised February 1996 Page 2

1. 1,335 Days Two Tablets revealed by `Abdu'l-Bahá which are published in "The Passing of` Abdu'l-Bahá" (Haifa: 1922), by Lady Blomfield and Shoghi Effendi, provide interpretations of the 1,335 days referred to by Daniel:

Now concerning the verse in Daniel, the interpretation whereof thou didst ask, namely, "Blessed is he who cometh unto the thousand three hundred and thirty five days". These days must be reckoned as solar and not lunar years. For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth, then will the teachings of God be firmly established upon the earth, and the Divine Light shall flood the world from the East even unto the West. Then, on this day, will the faithful rejoice! (p. 31) O servant of God! The afore mentioned a thousand three hundred and thirty-five years must be reckoned from the day of the flight of His Holiness Muhammad, the Apostle of God, (Hegira) salutations and blessings rest upon Him, at the close of which time the signs of the rise, the glory, the exaltation, the spread of the Word of God throughout the East and the West shall appear. (p. 31)

From these Tablets it appears that: - The spread of the Faith throughout the world will signal the fulfilment of this prophecy. - The "days must be reckoned as solar and not lunar years".

- The Tablets suggest that the prophecy is fulfilled by two different dates. The first derives from the centenary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh; the second is calculated from 622 A.D. -- hence, 1963 and 1957.

Shoghi Effendi associated Daniel's reference to the 1,335 days and Abdu'l-Bahá's statements about this prophecy with the centenary of the formal assumption of Bahá'u'lláh's prophetic office and the worldwide triumph of the Bahá'í Cause. He stressed that the prophecy refers to occurrences within the Bahá'í community, rather than to events in the outside world, e.g., the establishment of peace. While the Guardian clearly allied the

triumph of the Faith with the successful termination of the third Teaching Plan undertaken by the believers, in his letters and those written on his behalf, three specific dates are mentioned as marking the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy. 2.1 1960 -- A lunar reckoning

Concerning the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad, Shoghi Effendi, in "God Passes By", page 151, wrote: Daniel's Prophecies Revised February 1996 Page 3 The "hundred lunar years", destined to immediately precede that blissful consummation (1,335 days), announced by Daniel ... had commenced. One hundred years, by a "lunar reckoning", after the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh coincides with 1960. 2.2 1963 -- A solar reckoning

When the world-embracing Spiritual Crusade was announced in October 1952, Shoghi Effendi linked the completion of this decade-long enterprise with the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy:

LET THEM AS THEY ENTER IT VOW ONE VOICE ONE HEART ONE SOUL NEVER TURN BACK ENTIRE COURSE FATEFUL DECADE AHEAD UNTIL EACH EVERY ONE WILL HAVE CONTRIBUTED SHARE LAYING ON WORLD-WIDE SCALE AN UNASSAILABLE ADMINISTRATIVE FOUNDATION FOR BAHA'U'LLAH'S CHRIST-PROMISED KINGDOM ON EARTH SWELLING THEREBY CHORUS UNIVERSAL JUBILATION WHEREIN EARTH HEAVEN WILL JOIN AS PROPHESIED DANIEL ECHOED ABDU'L-BAHA ON THAT DAY WILL FAITHFUL REJOICE WITH EXCEEDING GLADNESS. ("Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950-1957" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), p. 44) Thereafter, the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy concerning the 1,335 days is associated with the end of the Ten Year Crusade. For example, in a letter dated 9 February 1953 on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a group of Bahá'ís, his secretary wrote: The purpose of the Conferences1 will be the world-wide propagation of the Faith. They will lay the foundations of the service of the Bahá'ís of the world for the great Ten Year Crusade ahead -- which, God willing, will be consummated in the fulfilment of the prophecies of Daniel, and the achievement of the initial goals set by Abdu'l-Bahá in the Tablets of the Divine Plan, whereby the world will be flooded with the Glory of the Lord. And, in a letter dated 11 May 1956 written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, we find the following statement:

...when we fulfil the Ten Year Crusade,

we will have brought into fulfilment Daniel's great prophecy of "Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1335 days".

1. International Conferences scheduled to take place during 1953.

Daniel's Prophecies Revised February 1996 Page 4

2.3 1957 There are several references in letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi which give 1957 as the date of the fulfilment of the prophecy. For example:

It is far too early to make any predictions about peace of any sort, judging by the ebullitions of the world's affairs these days! Abdu'l-Bahá, in His Tablets, connects the prophecy of Daniel -- 1957 -- with the proclamation and spread of the Cause. (31 July 1946 to an individual believer) It is interesting to note that, when a National Spiritual Assembly sought clarification from the beloved Guardian about whether the 1,335 days culminate in 1957 or in 1963, Shoghi Effendi in a letter dated 30 June 1952 written on his behalf indicated: Regarding the prophecy of Daniel: ... this prophecy refers to the hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in the Garden of Ridvan, Baghdad. Reference to this can be found in "The Passing of Abdu'l-Bahá" in quotations from two of His Tablets. (30 June 1952) 2.4 The Calculation of the Date A number of believers requested guidance from Shoghi Effendi about how to calculate the date that will coincide with the fulfilment of the 1,335 days. We provide two responses written on behalf of the Guardian:

The 1335 days referred to by Daniel will be fulfilled in 1963. The date of the Hijra is 622 A.D. The 1335 days is figured according to the solar calendar, but in adjusting the 1335 days, one must take into consideration the time at which the prophecies were given and change them into solar time, which would bring the date to 1963. There is one thing of importance for the Bahá'ís to understand; and that is, that this prophecy refers to happenings within the Faith, not occurrences outside the Faith. It refers specifically to the

spread of the Faith over the face of the earth. This will be accomplished when the Bahá'í Faith is firmly established in all of the virgin areas outlined in the Ten Year Crusade, and the other goals of the Crusade are completed. Thus it behoves us to work day and night in order to accomplish this glorious goal. (18 December 1953 to an individual believer)

As regards your question concerning the date 1335: The reckoning of this date does not bring it to the exact date of 1963, but a few more years. Nevertheless, there is no conflict in this,

Daniel's Prophecies Revised February 1996 Page 5 because `Abdu'l-Bahá says that it will be the beginning of the diffusion of the Light of the Faith in the east and the west. This will already have begun to come about before 1963, which is the fulfilment of the 100 years from Bahá'u'lláh's Declaration.

(31 January 1955 to an individual believer) It is noteworthy that insufficient information is provided in the first extract to permit a precise calculation, while in the second, the Guardian's secretary indicates that a calculation would not give "the exact date of 1963, but a few more years". The Research Department has not been able to locate any additional authoritative texts which contain detailed instructions concerning how to make the calculation. 3. The "Hundred Lunar Years"

In "God Passes By", page 151, Shoghi Effendi allies the "hundred lunar " years after the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh with the fulfilment of the 1,335 days of Daniel's prophecy. The only other reference to one hundred "lunar" years that the Research Department has, so far, been able to find, is contained in a letter dated 31 October 1947 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a National Spiritual Assembly. This letter clarifies the mistaken assumption that the year 1335 relates to the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's mystic experience in the Siyah-Chal (i.e., 1952-1953):

He wishes me to point out that this is inaccurate as on page 151 of "God Passes By", in the references to His Declaration, the Guardian clearly states that with this Declaration the "hundred lunar years" ... had commenced'. The mystic experience of Bahá'u'lláh was in the Siyah- Chal and has nothing to do with Daniel's prophecy. This statement of the Guardian is itself based on extracts from two of the Master's Tablets which are published in "The Passing of Abdu'l-Bahá".

In addition, a believer asked Shoghi Effendi about the relationship between the establishment of peace and the fulfilment of the prophecy about the 1,335 days and requested the source of, a reference to, and the starting date of, a prophecy concerning the

"one hundred years after the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh" referred to in a pilgrim's notes. The Guardian in a letter dated 1 April 1946 written on his behalf made the following response: Abdu'l-Bahá's interpretation of the prophecy of Daniel does not definitely connect it with either the Lesser or the Most Great Peace, but rather with a great step forward on the part of humanity and the Bahá'í Faith. All we know is that the Lesser and the Most Great Peace will come -- their exact dates we do not know. The 100 years is from 1853; the Master explains this in some of His Tablets, and is quoted in "The Passing of Abdu'l-Bahá".

Daniel's Prophecies Revised February 1996 Page 6

Both of the letters cited above base their conclusions on the same two Tablets of `Abdu'l-Bahá, which are quoted in section 2 of this memorandum. Since the beloved Guardian rules out a relationship between Daniel's prophecy and the intimation of the coming of revelation to Bahá'u'lláh, it is evident that some other explanation must be found for the significance of the one- hundred-year period that begins in 1853. 4. Concluding Remarks

While it is clear that the prophecy concerning the 1,335 days is associated with the spread of the Bahá'í Faith throughout the world, several different dates are given in our authoritative texts for the actual fulfilment of this prophecy. As mentioned earlier, the two Tablets of the Master which are cited in "The Passing of `Abdu'l-Bahá", page 31, suggest different dates for the fulfilment of the prophecy of the 1,335 days: 1963 and 1957. Further, in the letters written by or on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian indicates that these same Tablets form the basis for his interpretation of the date of the fulfilment of the 1,335 days referred to in Daniel. Three different dates are either given by the Guardian or can be inferred from these same Tablets -- 1957, 1960, and 1963.

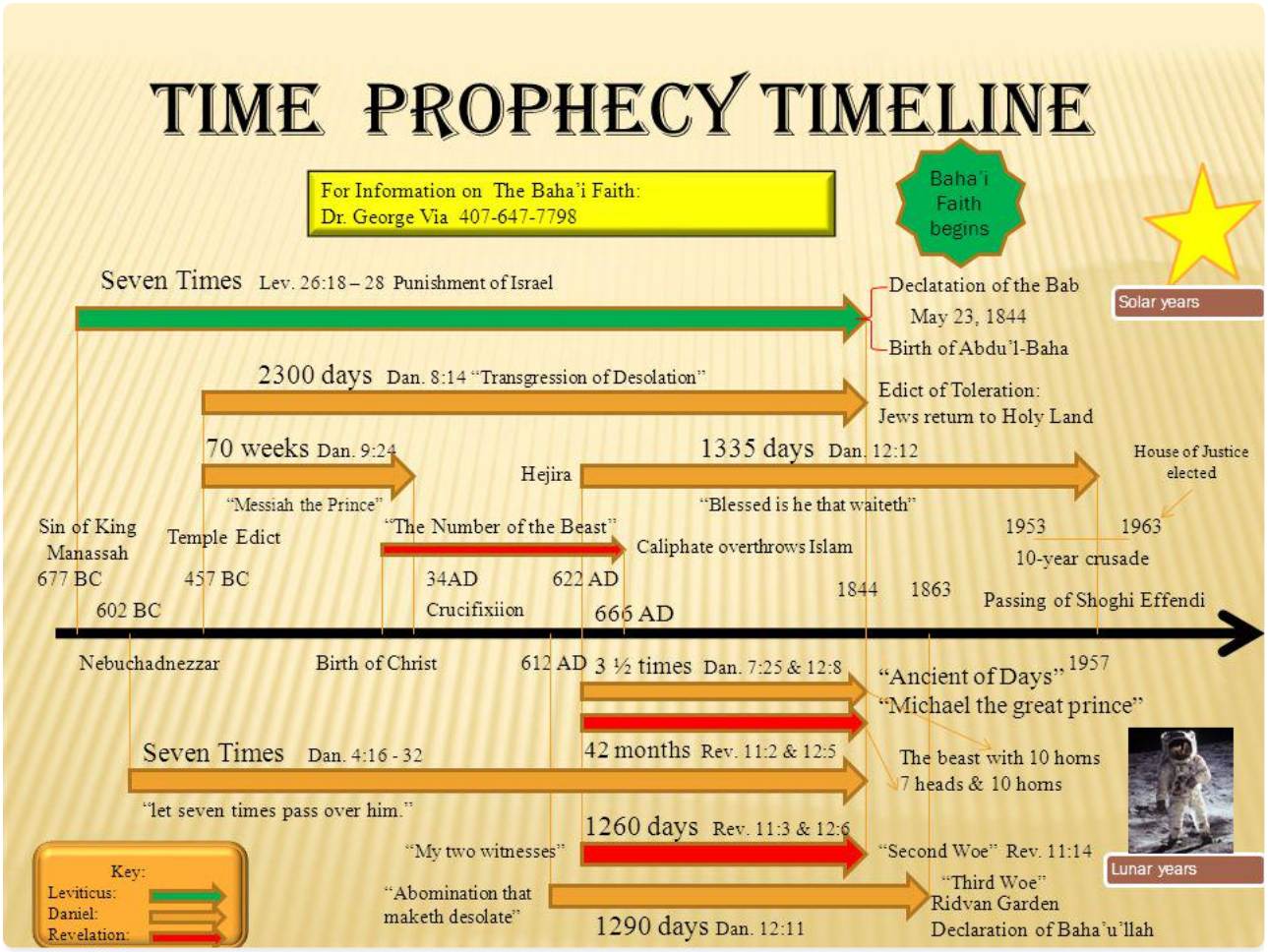
In addition, these same Tablets are also given as the reference for the one-hundred-year period that began in 1853.

In light of the foregoing, it is, therefore, suggested that:

- The prophecy of Daniel about the 1,335 days is not fulfilled by just one single date. Its fulfilment is, rather, a process that extends over a period of time.
- The fulfilment of the prophecy coincides with the period of the Ten Year Crusade, 1953-1963, a span of time that includes 1953 (the end of the hundred years whose significance is unclear), 1957, 1960, and 1963.

It is interesting to note that Shoghi Effendi described the Ten Year Crusade as the "ninth part" of that "majestic process, set in motion at the dawn of the Adamic cycle" by means of which the "light" of God's Revelation will be diffused in both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, through the operation of a decade-long world spiritual crusade whose termination will, God willing, coincide with the Most Great Jubilee commemorating the Centenary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad. (30 April 1953 to the All-America Intercontinental Teaching Conference, published in "Messages to the Bahá'í World 1950-1957" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), p. 155) Daniel's Prophecies Revised February 1996 Page 7

Furthermore, the Guardian in a letter dated 7 March 1955 written on his behalf to an individual believer states: Thus in the Ten Year Crusade, we are actually fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel, because with the completion of the Ten Year Crusade in 1963 we will have established the Faith in every part of the globe. What a great privilege it is that individuals such as we are, have an opportunity to not only spread the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, but in this period of the Ten Year Crusade, are actually engaged in the fulfilment of prophecy.



Comments

December 14. On this date in 1970, the UHJ wrote that "if the non-Bahá'í parents of a youth under fifteen permit their child to be a Bahá'í, we have no objection whatsoever from the point of view of our Teachings to permitting such a youth to declare as a Bahá'í, regardless of age."

Original file: 0518.html (position #96)

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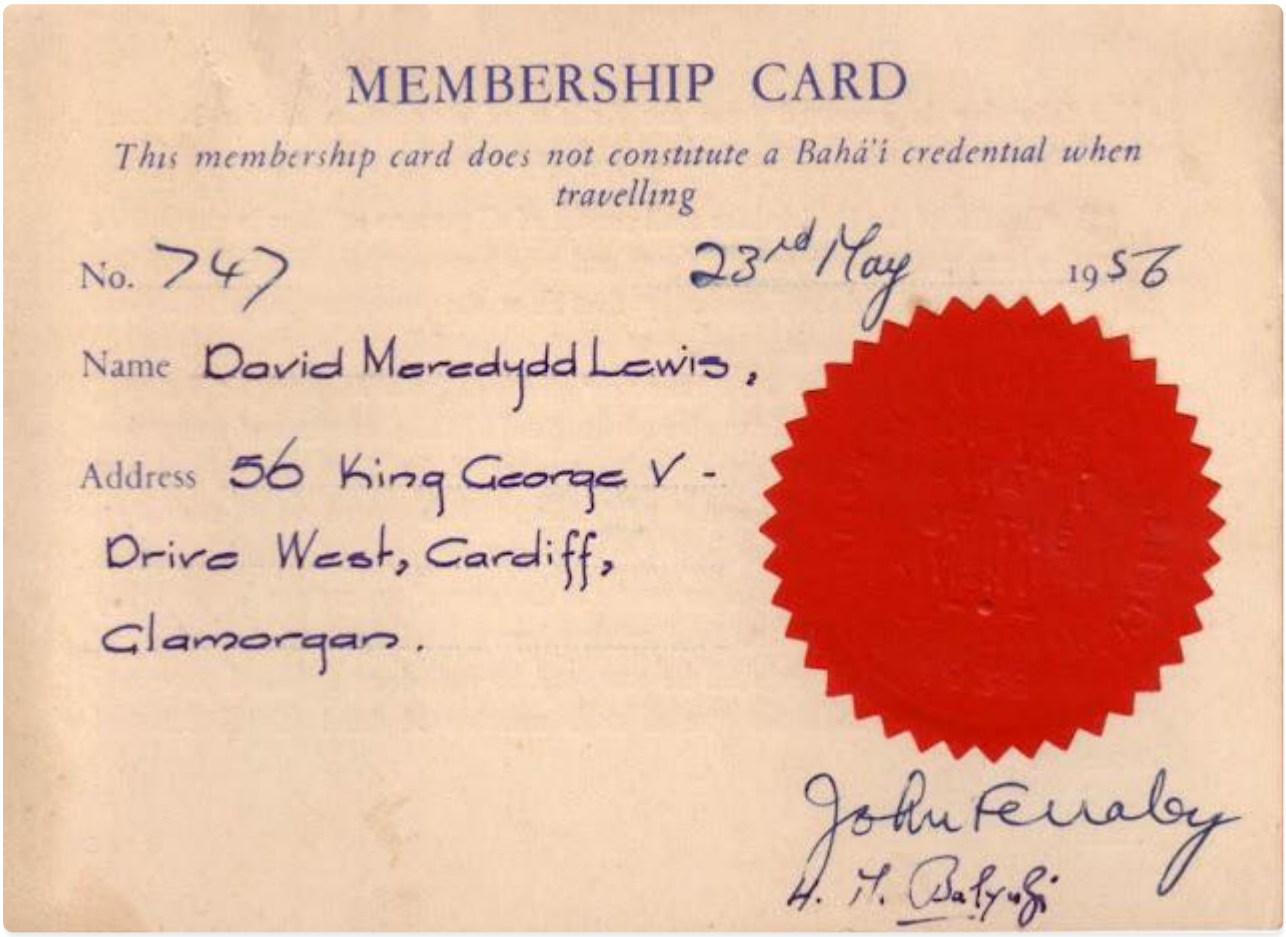
262. Children Are Accepted as Bahá'ís Regardless of Age

"...if the non-Bahá'í parents of a youth under fifteen permit their child to be a Bahá'í, we have no objection whatsoever from the point of view of our Teachings to permitting such a youth to declare as a Bahá'í, regardless of age. When he declares his faith in Bahá'u'lláh, he will then be accepted in the community and be treated as other Bahá'í children."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of El Salvador, December 14, 1970)


MEMBERSHIP CARD

This membership card does not constitute a Bahá'i credential when travelling

No. 747 23rd May 1956

Name David Meredydd Lewis,

Address 56 King George V - Drive West, Cardiff, Glamorgan.

John Ferraby

H. M. Balyuzi

Comments

December 14. On this date in 1871, Albert Schwarz, an early German Bahá'í who served as the inaugural Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria when it was established in 1922, was born. He served on that body as Chairman until his death.

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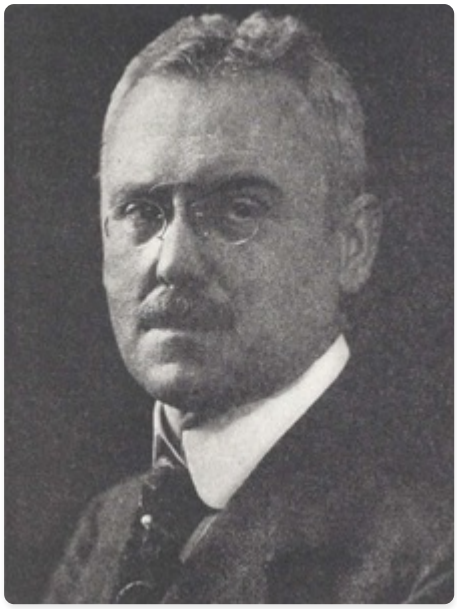


Comments

December 14. On this date in 1957, Leroy Ioas wrote "There are the vast number of French Canadians who are of Catholic persuasion. They would make fine Bahá'ís, and if representative members could be brought into the Faith, it will add prestige to the Faith, and help solidify its institutions."

Original file: 0516.html (position #94)

December 14. On this date in 1957, Leroy Ioas wrote Canadian Bahá'ís "The beloved Guardian has directed me to write you, that he feels it is time for the Canadian Bahá'ís, in their teaching work, to concentrate, to the extent possible, on bringing Catholics into the Faith. There are the vast number of French Canadians who are of Catholic persuasion. They would make fine Bahá'ís, and if representative members could be brought into the Faith, it will add prestige to the Faith, and help solidify its institutions."

December 14, 1956.

TEACHING FRENCH CANADIAN CATHOLICS

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada.

The beloved Guardian has directed me to write you, that he feels it is time for the Canadian Bahá'ís, in their teaching work, to concentrate, to the extent possible, on bringing Catholics into the Faith.

There are the vast number of French Canadians who are of Catholic persuasion. They would make fine Bahá'ís, and if representative members could be brought into the Faith, it will add prestige to the Faith, and help solidify its institutions.

Thus, to the extent possible, the friends should do what they can to attract Catholics and then confirm them in the Faith.

He sends the members of the National Assembly his loving greetings.

Faithfully yours,

LEROY IOAS

Comments

December 14. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi listed the "chief objectives of Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry... the first was the establishment of the Cause in America. The erection of the Bahá'í Temple in Ishqabad and the building on Mt. Carmel of a mausoleum marking the resting-place of the Bab."

Original file: 0515.html (position #93)

December 14. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi listed the three "chief objectives of Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry, it should be pointed out that the first was the establishment of the Cause in America. The erection of the Bahá'í Temple in Ishqabad and the building on Mt. Carmel of a mausoleum marking the resting-place of the Bab were the two remaining ones."

1616. Chief Objectives of Abdu'l-Bahá's Ministry

"As to the three aims which Shoghi Effendi has stated in his 'America and the Most Great Peace' to have been the chief objectives of Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry, it should be pointed out that the first was the establishment of the Cause in America. The erection of the Bahá'í Temple in Ishqabad and the building on Mt. Carmel of a mausoleum marking the resting-place of the Bab were the two remaining ones."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, December 14, 1933: Bahá'í News, No. 51, February 1934, p. 5)

Comments

December 14. On this date in 1998, Robert F. Riggs re-published a book titled "The Apocalypse: An Exegesis."

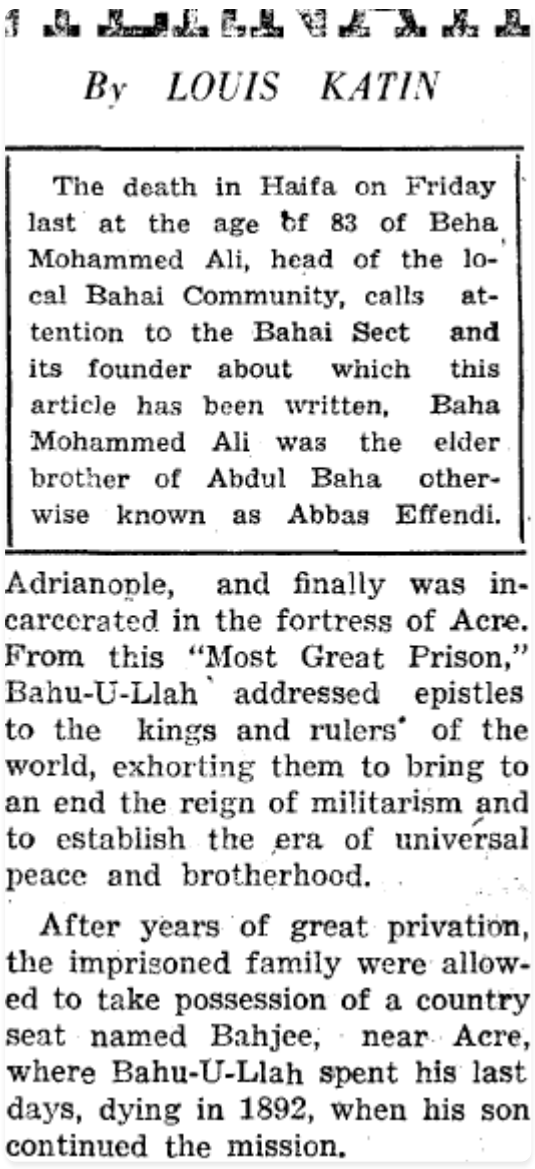
Original file: 0514.html (position #92)

December 14. On this date in 1998, Robert F. Riggs re-published a book titled *The Apocalypse: An Exegesis*.

Comments

December 15. On this date in 1937, "The Palestine Post" had an article titled "Internationalism" stating "the death in Haifa on Friday last at the age of 83 of Behe Mohammed Ali, head of the local Bahai Community, calls attention to the Bahai Sect and its founder about which this article has been

December 15. On this date in 1937, "The Palestine Post" had an article titled "Internationalism" stating "the death in Haifa on Friday last at the age of 83 of Behe Mohammed Ali, head of the local Bahai Community, calls attention to the Bahai Sect and its founder about which this article has been written. Baha Mohammed Ali was the elder brother of Abdul Baha otherwise known as Abbas Effendi.



By LOUIS KATIN

The death in Haifa on Friday last at the age of 83 of Beha Mohammed Ali, head of the local Bahai Community, calls attention to the Bahai Sect and its founder about which this article has been written. Baha Mohammed Ali was the elder brother of Abdul Baha otherwise known as Abbas Effendi.

Adrianople, and finally was incarcerated in the fortress of Acre. From this "Most Great Prison," Bahu-U-Llah addressed epistles to the kings and rulers of the world, exhorting them to bring to an end the reign of militarism and to establish the era of universal peace and brotherhood.

After years of great privation, the imprisoned family were allowed to take possession of a country seat named Bahjee, near Acre, where Bahu-U-Llah spent his last days, dying in 1892, when his son continued the mission.

Comments

December 15. On this date in 1994, the UHJ replied to an individual asking "concerning the degrees of authority possessed by Bahá’í historical sources, the process by which translations are authorized, the development of a “canon of Bahá’í doctrine,” the status of documents prepared by the …."

Original file: 0512.html (position #90)

December 15. On this date in 1994, the Universal House of Justice replied to an individual asking "concerning the degrees of authority possessed by Bahá’í historical sources, the process by which translations are authorized, the development of a “canon of Bahá’í doctrine,” the status of documents prepared by the Research Department"

> *The Universal House of Justice*

Department of the Secretariat

15 December 1994

[To an individual]

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Your ***letter of 20 September 1994 to ... , concerning the degrees of authority possessed by Bahá'í historical sources, the process by which translations are authorized, the development of a "canon of Bahá'í doctrine," the status of documents prepared by the Research Department,*** *and your request for various materials, was forwarded to the Universal House of Justice for its consideration. We are instructed to make the following reply to your questions numbered two, three and five. The remaining questions were referred to the Research Department for study. The enclosed memorandum and attachments represent the result of the deliberations of that Department.*

Your questions concerning translation revolve around ***two major issues: the process by which new translations into the English language are authorized and the authority of the translations of Shoghi Effendi.*** *We are asked to state that* ***a translation is regarded as authorized when it is approved by one or more translation committees appointed by the Universal House of Justice.*** *While members of the Research Department may well, from time to time, be appointed to serve on such a translation committee, the authorization of new translations is currently not one of the responsibilities assigned to the Research Department by the House of Justice. Further, the approval of a translation does not mean that improvements or amendments cannot be made to it in the future. As you, yourself, note, even Shoghi Effendi described his translation of the Kitáb-i-Íqán as*

> *... one more attempt to introduce to the West, in a language however inadequate, this book of unsurpassed pre-eminence among the writings of the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation. The hope is that it may assist others in their efforts to approach what must always be regarded as the unattainable goal—a befitting rendering of Bahá'u'lláh's matchless utterance.*

As to the policy concerning the publication of new translations of the Writings made by individual Bahá'ís, ***we are instructed to convey the fact that translations into English and revisions of earlier translations in that language must be checked by a translation committee at the Bahá'í World Centre and officially approved for publication.*** *While individuals are permitted to paraphrase or describe the contents of the passages they have translated and to include them in their manuscripts, without reference to the World Center,* ***new translations need to be submitted to the Universal House of Justice for checking and approval prior to publication. The importance of this policy lies in the fact that translations into most other languages are based on the approved English texts and are not made directly or solely from the original texts.*** *There have been, however, occasions when the House of Justice has permitted the publication of provisional translations made by individuals whose work is known to it. In these cases the translations usually appear in scholarly or other publications of limited distribution and are not likely to be used as a basis for translations into other languages.*

You ask whether the translations of Shoghi Effendi should be considered as the "standard" and whether, because of his function as infallible interpreter, the Guardian's translations provide "the true interpretation of the Writings." We are asked to call attention to the Introduction to The Kitáb-i-Aqdas where the Universal House of Justice describes the essential qualities of the Guardian's translations and the fact that they "are illumined by his uniquely inspired understanding of the purport and implications of the originals."

In view of your observations that "the chain of interpretation is unbroken, from the Báb to Bahá'u'lláh to 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Shoghi Effendi," and that "the 'authorized' interpretation of the Writings ends with the Guardian," you ask about the possibility of establishing a "canon of Bahá'í doctrine which could then be regarded as 'authorized' and 'official,'" and which would serve as a means by which "truth could be separated from falsehood according to the divinely revealed and interpreted standard." In this regard, the House of Justice asks us to state that, while it would be possible to codify and cross-reference the Bahá'í teachings, it would also be important to take into account such functions assigned to the Universal House of Justice in the Bahá'í Writings as its role in elucidating all matters "which have not outwardly been revealed in the Book" and in ensuring the essential flexibility of the Cause.

> ***The elucidations of the Universal House of Justice stem from its legislative function, and as such differ from interpretation. The divinely inspired legislation of the House of Justice does not attempt to say what the revealed Word means—it states what must be done in cases where the revealed Text or its authoritative interpretation is not explicit.*** *It is, therefore, on quite a different level from the sacred Text, and the Universal House of Justice is empowered to abrogate or amend its own legislation whenever it judges the conditions make this desirable.*
>
> *As to your question concerning whether the translations, compilations and other works prepared by the Research Department at the Bahá'í World Centre should be considered as partaking in the infallibility of the Universal House of Justice and, therefore, constituting the "final word," the House of Justice indicates that such materials, though prepared at its direction, represent the views of that Department. While such views are very useful as an aid to resolving perplexities or gaining an enhanced understanding of the Bahá'í teachings, they should never be taken to be in the same category as the elucidations and clarifications provided by the Universal House of Justice in the exercise of its assigned functions. However, the House of Justice chooses to convey the materials prepared by the Research Department to the friends because it wishes them to be thoughtfully attended to and seriously considered.*
>
> *We are asked to assure you of the prayers of the Universal House of Justice that your services to the Cause will be confirmed.*
>
> *With loving Bahá'í greetings,*
>
> *Department of the Secretariat*

To summarize rules of Bahá'í translations...

Arabic works cannot be translated into Persian.

Persian works cannot be translated into Arabic.

Persian and Arabic works can be translated "into Oriental languages such as Turkish and Urdu."

Persian and Arabic works can be translated into English.

Persian and Arabic works cannot be translated into European languages.

English works can be translated into European languages.

For further reading, please see "Persian, Arabic, and Provisional Translations", "Translation and provisional translations", "Unveiling the Hidden Words, by Diana Malouf: Commentary on "Translating the Hidden Words,' review by Franklin Lewis", a letter dated June 27, 1933 from Shoghi Effendi to Adelbert Mühlschlegel about Bahá'í orthography, a letter dated June 30, 1999 from the Universal House of Justice outlining its procedures for approving provisional as opposed to authorized translations, and a letter dated February 15, 1957 from Shoghi Effendi to French Bahá'ís.

On September 16, 1992, the Universal House of Justice wrote that Shoghi Effendi's English translation "of a Text should form the 'basis' for translations into other European languages" but "translations into Oriental languages such as Turkish and Urdu could be made directly from the original texts."

> *The Universal House of Justice*
>
> *Bahá'í World Centre*
>
> *Department of the Secretariat*
>
> *16 September 1992*
>
> *Dear Bahá'í Friend,*
>
> *The questions contained in your letter to ... about the language of Revelation and the status of Shoghi Effendi's translations were referred to the Universal House of Justice. We are instructed to convey the following response.*
>
> *With respect to your inquiry about whether, in the Bahá'í context, English might possibly be regarded as a language of Revelation, the House of Justice asks us to explain that, while* ***Shoghi Effendi's translations of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh into English carry with them a large measure of interpretation of the intent and purpose of the Author of the text -- an interpretation which he, as Interpreter of the Sacred Text, could alone authoritatively provide*** *-- one should not conclude that the English language into which the Writings were translated could, therefore, be considered as a*

language of Revelation.

As to the special status of Shoghi Effendi's translations, the beloved Guardian in a letter dated 15 November 1956 written on his behalf specified that ***"this English translation" of a Text should form the "basis" for translations into other European languages.*** *The Universal House of Justice, in a letter of 8 September 1964 underlined the uniqueness of the translations of Shoghi Effendi and provided the following elucidation:*

> ***...the beloved Guardian was not only a translator but the inspired Interpreter of the Holy Writings; thus, where a passage in Persian or Arabic could give rise to two different expressions in English he would know which one to convey. Similarly he would be much better equipped than an average translator to know which metaphor to employ in English to express a Persian metaphor which might be meaningless in literal translation.***

Thus, in general, ***speakers of other European tongues will obtain a more accurate translation by following the Guardian's English translation than by attempting at this stage in Bahá'í history to translate directly from the original.***

This does not mean, however, that the translators should not also check their translation with the original texts if they are familiar with Persian or Arabic. There may be many instances where the exact meaning of the English text is unclear to them and this can be made evident by comparison with the original....

The Universal House of Justice has also clarified that while the English translations of the Guardian might serve as a useful resource, ***translations into Oriental languages such as Turkish and Urdu could be made directly from the original texts.***

We are asked to assure you of the prayers of the Universal House of Justice for the confirmation of your services to the Cause of God.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

For Department of the Secretariat, ...

Comments

December 15. On this day in 1859, L.L. Zamenhof, the creator of Esperanto, was born. December 15 is celebrated in Esperanto culture as Zamenhof Day.

Original file: 0511.html (position #89)

December 15. On this day in 1859, L.L. Zamenhof, the creator of Esperanto, was born. December 15 is celebrated in Esperanto culture as Zamenhof Day.

On April 25, 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk to Esperantists in Washington, D.C., stating "We must endeavor with all our powers to establish this international auxiliary language throughout the world. It is my hope that it may be perfected through the bounties of God and that intelligent men may be selected from the various countries of the world to organize an international congress whose chief aim will be the promotion of this universal medium of speech."

> *Today the greatest need of the world of humanity is discontinuance of the existing misunderstandings among nations. This can be accomplished through the unity of language. Unless the unity of languages is realized, the Most Great Peace and the oneness of the human world cannot be effectively organized and established because the function of language is to portray the mysteries and secrets of human hearts. The heart is like a box, and language is the key. Only by using the key can we open the box and observe the gems it contains. Therefore, the question of an*

> *auxiliary international tongue has the utmost importance. Through this means international education and training become possible; the evidence and history of the past can be acquired. The spread of the known facts of the human world depends upon language. The explanation of divine teachings can only be through this medium. As long as diversity of tongues and lack of comprehension of other languages continue, these glorious aims cannot be realized. Therefore, the very first service to the world of man is to establish this auxiliary international means of communication. It will become the cause of the tranquillity of the human commonwealth. Through it sciences and arts will be spread among the nations, and it will prove to be the means of the progress and development of all races.* ***We must endeavor with all our powers to establish this international auxiliary language throughout the world. It is my hope that it may be perfected through the bounties of God and that intelligent men may be selected from the various countries of the world to organize an international congress whose chief aim will be the promotion of this universal medium of speech.***

One year later, on February 12, 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá' addressed the Paris Esperanto Society, as reported in the "Star of the West" magazine..,

> *Praise be to God, that Dr Zamenhof has created the Esperanto language. It has all the potential qualities of universal adoption. All of us must be grateful and thankful to him for his noble effort, for in this matter he has served his fellowmen well. He has constructed a language which will bestow divine benefits on all peoples. With untiring efforts and self-sacrifice on the part of its devotees it gives promise of universal acceptation. Therefore* ***everyone of us must study this language and make every effort to spread it so that each day it may receive a wider recognition, be accepted by all nations and governments of the world and become a part of the curriculum in all the public schools. I hope that the business of the future conferences and congresses will be carried on in Esperanto. In the future two languages will be taught in the schools, one the native tongue, the other the international auxiliary language.*** *Consider today how difficult is human communication. One may study 50 languages and yet travel through a country and still be at a loss. I, myself, know several of the Oriental languages, but know no Western tongue. Had this universal language pervaded the globe, I should have studied it and you would*

> *have been directly informed of my thoughts and I of yours and a special friendship would have been established between us.*
>
> ***Please send some teachers to Persia, if you can, so that they may teach Esperanto to the young people. I have written asking some of them to come here to study it.***
>
> *I hope that it will be promulgated very rapidly - then the world of humanity will find eternal peace; all the nations will associate with one another like mothers and sisters, fathers and brothers, and each individual member of the body politic will be fully informed of the thoughts of all*

This talk was also covered in J.E. Esselmont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* quotes 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the chapter entitled *Universal Language*:

> *At an Esperanto banquet given in Paris in February 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said:—*
>
> *Today one of the chief causes of the differences in Europe is the diversity of languages. We say this man is a German, the other is an Italian, then we meet an Englishman and then again a Frenchman. Although they belong to the same race, yet language is the greatest barrier between them. Were a universal auxiliary language in operation they would all be considered as one.*
>
> *His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh wrote about this international language more than forty years ago. He says that as long as an international language is not adopted, complete union between the various sections of the world will be unrealized, for we observe that misunderstandings keep people from mutual association, and these misunderstandings will not be dispelled except through an international auxiliary language.*
>
> *Generally speaking, the whole people of the Orient are not fully informed of events in the West, neither can the Westerners put themselves in sympathetic touch with the Easterners; their thoughts are enclosed in a casket—the international language will be the master key to open it. Were we in possession of a universal language, the Western books could easily be translated into that language, and the Eastern peoples be informed of their contents. In the same way the books of the East could be translated into that language for the benefit of the people in the West. The*

> *greatest means of progress towards the union of East and West will be a common language. It will make the whole world one home and become the strongest impulse for human advancement. It will upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity. It will make the earth one universal commonwealth. It will be the cause of love between the children of men. It will cause good fellowship between the various races.*
>
> ***Now, praise be to God that Dr. Zamenhof has invented the Esperanto language. It has all the potential qualities of becoming the international means of communication. All of us must be grateful and thankful to him for this noble effort; for in this way he has served his fellowmen well. With untiring effort and self-sacrifice on the part of its devotees Esperanto will become universal. Therefore every one of us must study this language and spread it as far as possible so that day by day it may receive a broader recognition, be accepted by all nations and governments of the world, and become a part of the curriculum in all the public schools. I hope that Esperanto will be adopted as the language of all the future international conferences and congresses, so that all people need acquire only two languages—one their own tongue and the other the international language. Then perfect union will be established between all the people of the world. Consider how difficult it is today to communicate with various nations. If one studies fifty languages one may yet travel through a country and not know the language. Therefore I hope that you will make the utmost effort, so that this language of Esperanto may be widely spread.***

In the past, Bahá'ís were more active in learning and encouraging the learning of Esperanto, and the links between Esperanto and the Bahá'í Faith are numerous. Ehsan Yarshater, the ex-Bahá'í founder and editor of Encyclopedia Iranica, notes how as a child in Iran he learned and taught Esperanto and that when his mother was visiting Haifa he wrote her a letter in Persian as well as Esperanto. L.L. Zamenhof's daughter, Lidia Zamenhof was a convert to the Bahá'í Faith. At the request of 'Abdu'l-Baha, Agnes Baldwin Alexander became an early advocate of Esperanto and used it to spread the Bahá'í teachings at meetings and conferences in Japan.

Due to the failure of Esperanto to gain significant traction, however, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's

statements have been backtracked, such that Shoghi Effendi said

> *Regarding the subject of Esperanto; it should be made clear to the believers that* ***while the teaching of that language has been repeatedly encouraged by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, there is no reference either from Him or from Bahá'u'lláh that can make us believe that it will necessarily develop into the international auxiliary language of the future.*** *Bahá'u'lláh has specified in His Writings that such a language will either have to be chosen from one of the existing languages, or an entirely new one should be created to serve as a medium of exchange between the nations and peoples of the world. Pending this final choice, the Bahá'ís are advised to study Esperanto only in consideration of the fact that the learning of this language can considerably facilitate intercommunication between individuals, groups and Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í world in the present stage of the evolution of the Faith.*

On August 3, 1935, a letter read "Shoghi Effendi, as you know, has been invariably encouraging the believers, both in the East and in the West, to make an intensive study of [Esperanto], and to consider it as an important medium for the spread of the Cause in international circles." The letter continued "Neither Bahá'u'lláh, nor even `Abdu'l-Bahá, ever stated that Esperanto will be the international auxiliary language. The Master simply expressed the hope that it may, provided certain conditions were fulfilled, develop into such a medium."

> *3 August 1935*
>
> *He wishes me particularly to convey to you his most genuine appreciation of your services in connection with the publication of "La Nova Tago" which he hopes will, through your efforts and those of the Esperanto-speaking Bahá'ís both in Germany and abroad, develop gradually into a leading Esperanto review, and thus become an effective medium for the spread of Teachings in Esperantist circles throughout the world. It is in view of the far-reaching possibilities which this publication can have as a teaching organ, that he has urged the German N.S.A. to resume its publication when, a few months ago, they had almost decided to discontinue printing it.*

> *With regard to your request for a special article from the Guardian which you wish to have published in the forthcoming issue of your magazine. He would suggest that you should translate his general letter addressed to the friends a few years ago, entitled "The Goal of a New World Order", as this, he feels, is a very suitable material for publication in that review, and is by far better than anything he can write at present.*
>
> *As to your suggestion regarding a more widespread use of the Esperanto among the Bahá'ís as a medium of correspondence. Shoghi Effendi, as you know, has been invariably encouraging the believers, both in the East and in the West, to make an intensive study of that language, and to consider it as an important medium for the spread of the Cause in international circles. He has been specially urging the friends to have the Cause well represented in all Esperanto Congresses and associations, and by this means cultivate greater friendship and cooperation between them and the Esperantists.*
>
> *But in this connection, he feels, he must make it clear that although the Cause views with much sympathy and appreciation the activities which the Esperantists are increasingly initiating for the spread of their language, yet it considers that the adoption of the Esperanto by the entire world is by no means an inevitable fact.* ***Neither Bahá'u'lláh, nor even `Abdu'l-Bahá, ever stated that Esperanto will be the international auxiliary language. The Master simply expressed the hope that it may, provided certain conditions were fulfilled, develop into such a medium.***

On January 29, 1904, Lidia Zamenhof, the daughter of Esperanto creator L.L. Zamnhof, was born. She converted to the Bahá'í Faith around 1925. In late 1937 she went to the United States to teach that religion as well as Esperanto. In December 1938, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, she returned to Poland, where she continued to teach and translated many Bahá'í writings. The description of her life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

Keith Ransom-Kehler, who died of small pox in Isfahan on October 23, 1933, is considered the first American Bahá'í martyr.

May Maxwell, who died of a heart attack while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Argentina in 1940, was designated a martyr by her son-in-law Shoghi Effendi.

But Lidia Zamenhoff, who died in a Nazi concentration camp while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Poland, was explicitly stated not to be a martyr.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about May Maxwell on March 3, 1940...

> *'Abdu'l-Bahá's beloved handmaid, distinguished disciple May Maxwell (is) gathered (into the) glory (of the) Abhá Kingdom. Her earthly life, so rich, eventful, incomparably blessed, (is) worthily ended. To sacred tie her signal services had forged, (the) priceless honor (of a) martyr's death (is) now added. (A) double crown deservedly won. (The) Seven-Year Plan, particularly (the) South American campaign, derive fresh impetus (from the) example (of) her glorious sacrifice. Southern outpost (of) Faith greatly enriched through association (with) her historic resting-place destined remain (a) poignant reminder (of the) resistless march (of the) triumphant army (of) Bahá'u'lláh. Advise believers (of) both Americas (to) hold befitting memorial gathering.*

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about Lidia Zamenhof on January 28, 1946...

> *Heartily approve nationwide observance for dauntless Lydia Zamenhof. Her notable services, tenacity, modesty, unwavering devotion fully merit high tribute by American believers. Do not advise, however, that you designate her a martyr.*

The description of her life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

The Bahá'í leadership organized to have Lidia brought to tour and teach in the United States. Their plan was to have her work there, but they neglected her, failing to do proper legal paperwork and poorly accommodating her.

By the time Lidia's visa expired, her extension request was denied because she was found working without a work permit, which her Bahá'í handlers had not obtained. Her friends in the United States pleaded with her to not return to Poland, on account of her Jewishness and the expected invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany, which would occur in 1939.

Lidia Zamenhof wrote Shoghi Effendi, pleading for guidance and help. In a final desperate plea she even asked him to give her asylum in Haifa, a request that was tersely denied. Shoghi Effendi told her she must return to Poland because they "need" her there to spread the Bahá'í Faith there. She returned to Poland and spent her last days recruiting for the Bahá'í Faith, ultimately managing to convert one person. Even after her return to Poland, she wrote Shoghi Effendi stating her intention to stay in Poland a few weeks and then go to France. Again, Shoghi Effendi wrote her, telling her to remain in "your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown." Lidia Zamenhof would eventually be killed by the Nazis.

Later friends of Lidia petitioned the Bahá'ís to formally declare her a martyr of the Faith. Their request was denied.

The story is related in *Bridge of Words*, pages 181 to 195 in the 7th and 8th sub-chapters titled "The Priestess" and "Vanishings".

Here is a passage detailing her interactions with Shoghi Effendi:

> *...the day her visa expired, she learned that her extension had been denied on the ground that she had violated employment regulations. If there had been any doubt, it was now clear: she had been ill-advised and ill-served by her handlers, who had failed to apply for an available waiver for employment laws. Though her friend Ernest Dodge did his utmost for months to plead her case, he was only able to secure an extension until early December.*
>
> *Advice from friends streamed in: she should go to Cuba, Canada, France, California--anywhere but Poland--and reapply for a visa. Panic was not in her nature, but anxious and fearful, she once again turned to the Guardian for advice. Heller quotes her cable in full:*
>
> > *EXTENSION SOJOURN AMERICAN REFUSED. FRIENDS TRYING TO CHANGE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION. OTHERWISE RETURNING TO POLAND. PLEASE CABLE IF SHOULD ACT OTHERWISE.*
>
> *His response was decisive:*

> *APPROVE RETURN TO POLAND. DEEP LOVING APPRECIATION. SHOGHI.[169]*

Still she waited, hoping that her fate would turn for the better. For a time, an invitation seemed to be forthcoming from Canada, but "the Canadians aren't courageous enough. . . . they 'see difficulties.'" This time, when she requested Shoghi Effendi's permission to meet him in Haifa, she was seeking refuge, not transcendence. He cabled his reply:

> *REGRET DANGEROUS SITUATION IN PALESTINE NECESSITATES POSTPONEMENT OF PILGRIMAGE.*

She wrote, with the humility of a medieval pilgrim, that she knew it was because "such privilege is not often received and that certainly one must deserve it, and second--because of the war in Palestine." Indeed, Haifa was dangerous. Strategically important because of an oil pipeline, Haifa had been the target of attacks by displaced fellahin, by the Irgun, and by the Royal Navy trying to stem the tide of gunrunner and terrorists. Surely Shoghi Effendi knew that to ensure Lidia Zamenhof's safety, he would have to shelter her in his compound, and this he was not prepared to do.

She told her anguished friends that she intended to return to Poland: after all, Shoghi Effendi had advised it, and it was God's will that she rejoin her family in a time of trouble.

From the following section:

Protest was not an option for Lidia Zamenhof when she returned to Warsaw in the winter of 1938. She was reconciled to her fate, and when her faith needed shoring up, she wrote long letters to her Bahai friends: "If I left America," she wrote, "perhaps it was because God preferred that I work in another land." She was writing bleak allegories: Christmas trees with candles that burn for a moment and go dark; a country called "Nightland," "where the sun had not risen for so long

that it had nearly been forgotten."[176] After she wrote to Shoghi Effendi that she planned to stay in Poland a few weeks, then go to France, his secretary replied:

> *Although your efforts to obtain a permit [in the United States] . . . did not prove successful, you should nevertheless be thankful for the opportunity you have had of undertaking such a long and fruitful journey. He hopes that experiences you have gathered during all these months . . . will now help you to work more effectively to spread the Cause in the various European countries you visit, and particularly in your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown.[127]*

In a postscript, the Guardian himself wrote that he looked forward to meeting her "face to face in the Holy Land" at a time "not far distant." In the meantime, she was to bring Bahai to the Poles, lecturing, paying calls, and translating sacred Bahai texts into Polish. After eighteen months of effort, she could count all the Bahais in Poland on one hand.

The chapter goes on to detail the circumstances of her capture and death, and the last paragraph is as follows:

A few months after the war ended, the Bahai National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada began to plan a memorial service for Lidia Zamenhof. They consulted Shogh Effendi: shouldn't she be designated among the martyrs of the Bahai faith? On January 28th, 1946, the eve of what would have been Lidia's forty-second birthday, Shoghi Effendi cabled his American followers:

> *HEARITLY APPROVE NATIONWIDE OBSERVANCE FOR DAUNTLESS LYDIA ZAMENHOF. HER NOTABLE SERVICES, TENACITY, MODESTY, UNWAVERING DEVOLUTION FULLY MERIT HIGH TRIBUTE BY AMERICAN BELIEVERS. DO NOT ADVISE, HOWEVER, THAT YOU DESIGNATE HER A MARTYR.[183]*

> *She had intended to give her life for the Bahai faith, but died as an Esperantist, a Zamenhof, and a Jew.*

Comments

rmoreiraa: Cool info... but what happened to Esperanto? Does someone talk it? That was a really nice proyect.

December 15. On this date in 1922, Shoghi Effendi returned to Haifa. On April 5, 1922, some four months after returning to Haifa subsequent to the death of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi left Haifa with his eldest cousin and close friend Ruhi Afnan for rest and relaxation in the Swiss Alps.

Original file: 0510.html (position #88)

December 15. On this date in 1922, Shoghi Effendi returned to Haifa. On April 5, 1922, some four months after returning to Haifa subsequent to the death of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi left Haifa with his eldest cousin and close friend, Ruhi Afnan who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker, for rest and relaxation in the Bernese Oberland in the Swiss Alps. In his absence, Shoghi Effendi placed Bahíyyih Khánum as Head of the Cause, and later that month the "Star of the West" magazine would publish letters from Shoghi Effendi and Bahíyyih Khánum explaining the situation. Ruhi Afnan would be declared a Covenant-breaker in a series of cablegrams in the 1950's.

From "Star of the West" magazine, Volume 14, Issue 4...

Important Letters from Shoghi Effendi and Bahaeyeh Khanum, the Greatest Holy Leaf

Photograph of the original letter written by Shoghi Effendi and translation of some, sent to the STAR OF THE WEST by his honor Mirza Hadi Shirazi, the noble father of Shoghi Effendi, through Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi. This photograph and the following original letter (from the Greatest Holy Leaf) reached this country after the same recently sent out by the National Spirtual Assembly to the Assemblies throughout America:

> *He Is God!*
>
> *This servant, after that grievous event and great calamity—the ascension of His Holiness Abdul-Baha to the Abha Kingdom—has been so stricken with grief and pain and so entangled in the troubles (created) by the enemies of the Cause of God, that I consider my presence here, at such a time and in such an atmosphere, is not in accordance with the fulfillment of my important and sacred duties.*
>
> *For this reason, unable to do otherwise, I have left for a time the affairs of the Cause, both at home and abroad, under the supervision of the Holy Family and the headship of the Greatest Holy Leaf—may my soul be a sacrifice to her—until, by the Grace of God, having gained health, strength, self-confidence and spiritual energy, and having taken into my hands, in accordance with my aim and desire, entirely and regularly the work of service, I shall attain to my utmost spiritual and aspiration.*
>
> *The servant of His Threshold, (April, 22) (Signed) SHOGHI*
>
> *Letter from the Greatest Holy Leaf, Bahaeyeh Khawwm, sent to the Editors of the STAR OF THE WEST:*
>
> *He Is God!*
>
> *To the servants of the Blessed Beauty and the dear friends of His Holiness Abdul-Baha!*
>
> *Although the hearts of the people of Bahá are intensely burning on account of the great calamity (of the ascension of Abdul-Baha), and the sobbing and sighing of the friends have reached the ears of the Supreme Concourse and the Hosts of Holiness in the Abha (Most Glorious) Paradise, yet, because this day is the day of service and this hour is the hour of diffusing the fragrances, the friends of God*

> *must, like a bright flame, arise in service to the Cause of God and surpass one another (in service). They should be like penetrating meteors, expelling every disloyal covenant-breaker, in order that in the Preserved Tablet of God, they may be recorded with the group who has fulfilled the Covenant and Testament of God.*
>
> *His Holiness, the Guardian of the Cause of God, the Primal Branch, the joy of the people of Baha—Shoghi Effendi—because of this great calamity, most painful event, infinite sorrow and the severity of the effect upon himself—has desired to travel for several days, that he may regain his health and have rest. Then he will return to the Holy Threshold, arise in service to the Cause of God and perform his duties.*
>
> *According to a letter written by his own hand, which is enclosed, he has appointed this prisoner to supervise and manage the affairs of the Cause, through consultation with the Holy Family, during his absence. Therefore, this perishable one, temporarily, has organized an assembly to act according to the advice of the souls who were appointed and nominated by him—His Holiness Shoghi Effendi.*
>
> *I am hopeful, that during the period of his absence, the friends of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful may show forth great efforts in the progress of the Cause of God, and the Cause of God may spread rapidly.*
>
> *Verily, He is Compassionate and Merciful to His Servants.*
>
> *(Signature and seal) BAHAEYEH.*
>
> *(Month of Shaban, 1340—April 1922. Translated by Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi, Chicago, May, 1922.)*

The cablegrams concerning the declaration of Ruhi Afnan a Covenant-breaker include one from December 13, 1951 titled "Old and New Covenant-Breakers" where Shoghi Effendi says, "Evidences multiplying attesting Ruhi's increasing rebelliousness, efforts exerted my eldest sister pave way fourth alliance members family Siyyid 'Alí involving marriage his granddaughter with Ruha's son and personal contact recently established my own treacherous, despicable brother Riaz with Majdi'd-Din, redoubtable enemy Faith, former henchman Muhammad-'Ali, Archbreaker Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant. Another cablegram sent May 17, 1953, titled "Treacherous Ruhi Afnan", stated "Treacherous Ruhi Afnan, not content with previous disobedience, correspondence with Ahmad Sohrab, contact with old Covenant-breakers, sale, in conjunction with other members of family, of sacred property

purchased by Founder of Faith, and allowing his sister to marry son of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's enemy, is now openly lecturing on Bahá'í movement, claiming to be its exponent and is misrepresenting the teachings and deliberately causing confusion in minds of authorities and the local population. Inform National Assemblies."

Comments

December 15. On this date in 1945, Emogene Hoagg died in Charleston, South Carolina. She was an early travel-teacher, translator of the Bahá'í writings into Italian, and the first pioneer to Italy.

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Pictured above are early Western Bahá'í pilgrims. Standing left to right: Charles Mason Remey, Sigurd Russell, Edward Getsinger and Laura Clifford Barney; Seated left to right: Ethel Jenner Rosenberg, Madam Jackson, Shoghi Effendi, Helen Ellis Cole, Lua Getsinger, Emogene Hoagg

Comments

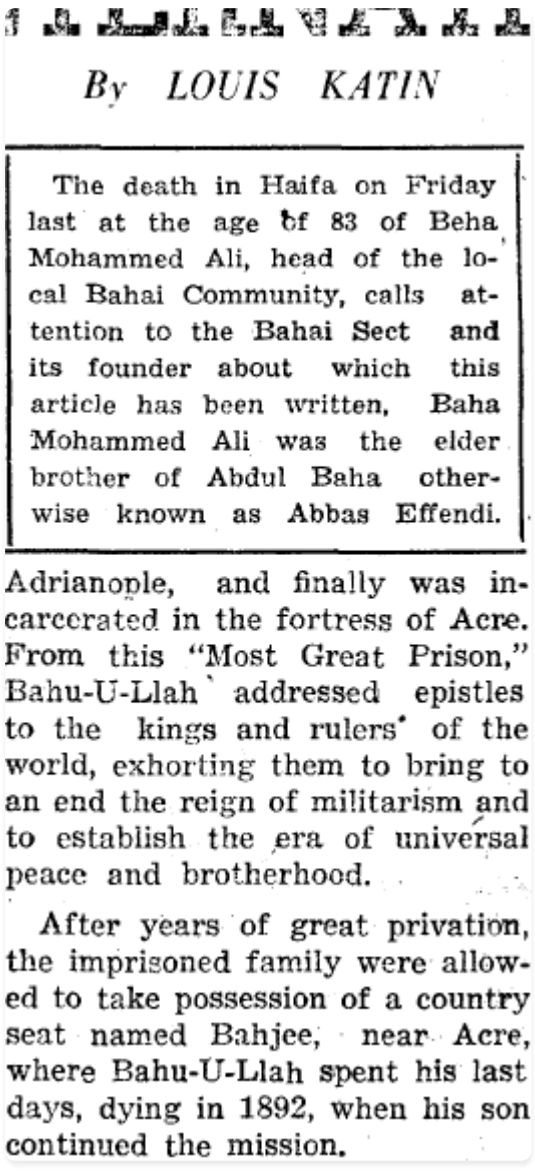
December 15. On this date in 1937, "The Palestine Post" reported "the Bahai religion..Its numbers cannot be computed, for it has no ceremonial, no ritual, and no baptism, being based instead on pure thought..Among the peoples of the West, the Bahai credo is disseminated by the New History Society.

Original file: 0508.html (position #86)

December 15. On this date in 1937, *The Palestine Post* reported

> *Contrary to most people's conception, the Bahai religion is not confined merely to a*

> *tiny minority in Palestine but has spread to all continents and races. Its numbers cannot be computed, for it has no ceremonial, no ritual, and no baptism, being based instead on pure thought.*
>
> *Among the peoples of the West, the Bahai credo is disseminated by the New History Society, which, founded eight years ago, promotes extreme internationalism, to the extent of advocating a. universal system of coinage, criminal codes and school text books.*



By LOUIS KATIN

The death in Haifa on Friday last at the age of 83 of Beha Mohammed Ali, head of the local Bahai Community, calls attention to the Bahai Sect and its founder about which this article has been written. Baha Mohammed Ali was the elder brother of Abdul Baha otherwise known as Abbas Effendi.

Adrianople, and finally was incarcerated in the fortress of Acre. From this "Most Great Prison," Bahu-U-Llah addressed epistles to the kings and rulers of the world, exhorting them to bring to an end the reign of militarism and to establish the era of universal peace and brotherhood.

After years of great privation, the imprisoned family were allowed to take possession of a country seat named Bahjee, near Acre, where Bahu-U-Llah spent his last days, dying in 1892, when his son continued the mission.

Comments

December 16. On this date in 1950, a little over a year after the international recognition of the State of Israel, the mansion at Mazra'a was leased from the Israeli government by the Bahá'í Administrative Order. Bahá'u'lláh lived there from 1877 until 1879, before moving to the Mansion at Bahjí

Original file: 0507.html (position #85)

December 16. On this date in 1950, a little over a year after the international recognition of the State of Israel, the mansion at Mazra'a was leased from the Israeli government by the Bahá'í Administrative Order. Bahá'u'lláh lived there from 1877 until 1879, before moving to the Mansion at Bahjí.

The transaction is described in Baha'i News, no. 244, June 1951, p. 4

> ***Masra'ih is a Moslem religious endowment, and it is consequently impossible, under existing laws in this country, for it to be sold. However, as the friends are aware, the Ministry of Religions, due to the direct intervention of the Minister himself, Rabbi Maimon, consented, in the face of considerable opposition, to deliver Masra'ih to the Baha'is as a Holy Place to be visited by Baha'i pilgrims. This means that we rent it from the Department of Moslem and Druze affairs in the Ministry of Religions. The head of this Department is also a Rabbi, Dr. Hirschberg. Recently he, his wife and party, visited all the Baha'i properties in Haifa and 'Akka, following upon a very pleasant tea party in the Western Pilgrim House with the members of the International Baha'i Council.***

The mansion at Mazra'a would later be purchased by the Bahá'í Administrative Order from the Israeli government as reported in Messages from the Universal House of Justice 1968-1973, published 1976; Ridván Message 1973, p. 119

> *The Mansion of Mazra'ih, often referred to by the beloved Guardian as one of the "twin mansions" in which the Blessed Beauty resided after nine years within the walled prison-city of 'Akká, and dear to the hearts of the believers by reason of its associations with their Lord, has at last been purchased together with 24,000 square meters of land extending into the plain on its eastward side.*

On November 12, 1952, a cablegram sent by Shoghi Effendi announced the "acquisition of vitally-needed property" of the Mansion of Bahji and the area around it from "the Development Authority of the State of Israel...The exchange of said property, including land and houses, was made possible by the precipitate flight of the former Arab owners."

> *Acquisition of Vitally-Needed Property*
>
> *Announce to Bahá'í communities, East and West, on the joyous occasion of the hundred and thirty-fifth Anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's Birthday, the successful termination of the protracted negotiations, initiated two years ago and culminating in the signature to the contract providing* ***the eventual, formal***

transfer by the Development Authority of the State of Israel *to the Palestine Branch of the American National Spiritual Assembly of the* ***extensive, long-desired, vitally-needed property surrounding and safeguarding for posterity the Most Holy Tomb of the Founder of the Faith, as well as the adjoining Mansion.***

The acquired area, raising Bahá'í holdings on the holy plain of &Akka from four thousand to one hundred and fifty-five thousand square meters, was exchanged against property donated by children of Zikrullah, grandchildren of Mírzá Muhammad Quli, Bahá'u'lláh's faithful half-brother and companion in exile.

This spontaneous offer contrasts with the shameful action of the family in the sale to non-Baha'is of the property in the neighborhood of the Jordan valley purchased through the instrumentality of `Abdu'l-Bahá during Bahá'u'lláh's lifetime, pursuant to His instructions and alluded to in His writings.

The forty acre property acquired in this single transaction almost equals the entire Bahá'í international endowments purchased in the course of sixty years in the vicinity of the Báb's Sepulcher on the slope of Mount Carmel.

The exchange of said property, including land and houses, was made possible by the precipitate flight of the former Arab owners, *traditional supporters of the old Covenant-breakers and descendants of the notorious enemy of `Abdu'l-Bahá who placed his residence at the disposal of the Committee of Investigation.*

The signature to the agreement signalized the commencement of large-scale landscaping, aiming at the beautification of the immediate precincts of the holiest spot in the entire Bahá'í world, itself the prelude to the eventual erection, as happened in the case of the Báb's Sepulcher, of a befitting Mausoleum enshrining the precious Dust of the Most Great Name.

Desire to acknowledge the indefatigable efforts exerted by both Larry Hautz and Leroy Ioas enabling the consummation of the initial stage of the enterprise destined to eclipse in its final phase the splendor and magnificence of the Báb's resting-place on Mount Carmel.

--Shoghi

[Cablegram, November 12, 1952]

On January 21, 1949, Shoghi Effendi met with David Ben Gurion. In the chapter titled *The Heart and Nerve Centre* in her book *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith*, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum describes this meeting...

> *In January 1949 Mr. Ben Gurion, the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, came to Haifa on his first official visit and the Mayor naturally invited Shoghi Effendi to attend the reception being given in his honour by the Municipality. The dilemma was acute, for if the Guardian did not go, it would, with every reason, be taken as an affront to the new Government, and if he did go he would inevitably be submerged in a sea of people where any pretence at protocol would be swept away (this was indeed the case, as my father, Shoghi Effendi's representative, reported after he returned from this reception). The Guardian therefore decided that as he would not be attending, but was more than willing to show courtesy to the Prime Minister of the new State, he would call upon him in person. With great difficulty this was arranged through the good offices of the Mayor of Haifa, Shabatay Levy, as Mr. Ben Gurion's time in Haifa was very short and it was only two days before the first general election in the new State.*
>
> *The interview took place on Friday evening, January 21st, in the private home the Prime Minister was staying in on Mt. Carmel and lasted about fifteen minutes. Ben Gurion enquired about the Faith and Shoghi Effendi's relation to it and asked if there was a book he could read; Shoghi Effendi answered his questions and assured him he would send him a copy of his own book God Passes By — which he later did, and which was acknowledged with thanks. Typical of the whole history of the Cause and the constant problems that beset it was a long article which appeared in the leading English-language newspaper on December 20, 1948, in which, in the most favourable terms, its teachings were set forth and the station of Shoghi Effendi as its World Head mentioned. On January 28, 1949, there appeared in the letter column of this paper a short and extraordinary statement, signed "Bahai U.N. Observer", which flatly refuted the article and asserted, "Mr. Rabbani is not the Guardian of the Bahai faith, nor its World Leader" and gave the New History Society in New York as a source of further information*
>
> *As there was no such thing as a "Bahai U.N. Observer" this move was plainly inspired by the once-more hopeful band of old Covenant-breakers, who sought, at the outset of a new regime, to blacken Shoghi Effendi's reputation and divert*

attention from his station by referring to Ahmad Sohrab's rootless group in America. At a later date, when in 1952 the Covenant-breakers in Bahji brought their case in the local courts against Shoghi Effendi for the demolition of an old building near the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh, Sohrab sought, unsuccessfully, to bring pressure on the Minister of Religious Affairs to discredit the Bahá'í claims. It was with attacks such as this, both open and covert, that the Guardian, on the threshold of a new phase in the development of the affairs of the Faith at its World Centre, once more had to content.

It had long been the desire of Shoghi Effendi to obtain control of the Mansion at Mazra'ih, where Bahá'u'lláh had first lived when He quitted once-for-all the walls of the prison-city of 'Akka. This property was a Muslim religious endowment and had now fallen vacant. It was planned by the government to turn it into a rest home for officials. All efforts, through the departments concerned, to procure this property were unavailing until Shoghi Effendi appealed directly to [Ben Gurion]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Ben-Gurion), explaining its significance to the Bahá'ís and his desire to have it visited by pilgrims as a place so closely associated with Bahá'u'lláh. The Prime Minister himself then intervened in the matter and it was leased to the Bahá'ís as an historic site. Shoghi Effendi proudly informed the Bahá'í world, on December 16, 1950, that its keys had been delivered to us, by the Israeli authorities, after the lapse of more than fifty years.

The affairs of the Bahá'í Community, in matters concerning its day-to-day dealings with the government in connection with the work at the World Centre, had been placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and was at first handled by the head of the Department that dealt with Muslim affairs. This Shoghi Effendi violently objected to as it implied the Faith was in some way identified with Islam. After much negotiation a letter was received from the Minister of Religious Affairs, dated December 13, 1953, addressed to "His Eminence, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, World Head of the Bahá'í Faith" in which he said:

> *"...I am pleased to inform you of my decision to establish in our Ministry a separate Department for the Bahá'í Faith. I hope that this department will be of assistance to you in matters concerning the Bahá'í Centre in our State.*
>
> *In the name of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the State of Israel, I wish to assure Your Eminence that full protection will be given to the Holy Places*

> *as well as to the World Centre of the Bahá'í Faith."*

The victory was all the more welcome, following as it did the previously mentioned court case against Shoghi Effendi brought on a technicality by the Covenant-breakers in connection with the demolition of a house adjoining the Shrine and Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahji. Never tired of seeking to publicly humiliate and discredit the Head of the Faith, be it 'Abdu'l-Bahá or the Guardian, they had had the temerity to summon Shoghi Effendi to appear in court as a witness. Once more, greatly concerned for the honour of the Cause at its World Centre, Shoghi Effendi appealed direct to the Prime Minister, sending as his representatives the President, Secretary-General and Member-at-Large of the International Bahá'í Council (whom he had summoned from Italy for this purpose) to Jerusalem on more than one visit to press the strategy he himself had devised. These representations were successful and on the grounds of its being a purely religious issue it was removed by Government from the jurisdiction of the civil courts. As soon as the plaintiffs found their plan to humiliate Shoghi Effendi had been forestalled, they were willing to settle the case by negotiation. That the authorities and the Bahá'í Community were equally pleased by this conclusion of the matter is shown in these letters written to the Guardian by members of the Prime Minister's staff — two men to whom the Faith owed much for their sympathetic efforts on its behalf at that time:

> *PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE Jerusalem, 19th May, 1952. His Eminence Shoghi Rabbani, World Head of the Bahá'í Faith, Haifa. Your Eminence, I am instructed to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 16th May addressed to the Prime Minister. As you are no doubt aware, the dispute between yourself as the World head of the Bahá'í Faith and members of the family of the founder of the Faith has found its solution and there is no need, therefore, to take any administrative action in order to solve the problem. May I express to you our gratitude for your wise and benevolent attitude taken in the dispute which enabled us to impose a just and, as we hope, a lasting solution on the dissident group? The Prime Minister assures you of his personal esteem and sends you his best wishes.*
> *Yours sincerely, S. Eynath Legal Adviser*

It is significant to note that they address Shoghi Effendi as "His Eminence", a title which, though still far below what his position merited, was the one that had been introduced in the earliest days of his ministry, but never really used by any officials until the formation of the Jewish State.

The cordial nature of the relations established between the Guardian and the officials of the State of Israel encouraged Shoghi Effendi to ascertain if the President would care to visit the Bahá'í Shrine in Haifa; when word was received that he would accept such an invitation, Shoghi Effendi formally invited him to do so and arrangements were made for the morning of April 26, 1954, at which time, the Director of the President's Office wrote to Shoghi Effendi, the President would "be pleased to pay you an official visit". Accordingly the President and his wife arrived at the home of the Master, attended by two officials, partook of light refreshment and were presented by the Guardian with a Persian album, painted with miniatures and bound in silver, containing some photographs of the Shrines, as a memento of their visit. The Presidential party, with Shoghi Effendi and those who accompanied him, then proceeded to the gardens on Mt. Carmel. It was the first time in the history of the Cause that the Head of an independent nation had ever made an official visit of this kind and it constituted another milestone in the development of the World Centre of the Faith. The President and his companions showed the greatest respect to the Shrine of the Bab, removing their shoes as we did, before entering it, the men keeping their hats on out of reverence as Jews for a holy place; it was a very moving moment to see President Ben Zvi standing beside Shoghi Effendi, the former with his European hat, the latter with his simple black fez, before the threshold. After a few words of explanation from Shoghi Effendi we all withdrew and walked about he gardens for a few minutes before saying good-bye in front of the Oriental Pilgrim House where the President's car was awaiting him.

On April 29th the President wrote personally to the Guardian: "I should like to express my thanks for your kind hospitality and for the interesting time I spent with you visiting the beautiful Gardens and remarkable Shrine... I do appreciate the friendship which the Bahá'í Community has for Israel and it is my sincere hope that we may all live to see the strengthening of amity between all peoples on earth." On May 5th the Guardian replied to this letter in equally warm terms: "...It was a great pleasure to meet Your Excellency and Mrs. Ben Zvi, and be able to show you one of our places of Bahá'í pilgrimage in Israel... If it suits your convenience, Mrs. Rabbani and I, accompanied by Mr. Ioas, would like to call

> *upon Your Excellency and Mrs. Ben Zvi in Jerusalem..." The time for this return call was set for the afternoon of May 26th and we had tea and a pleasant conversation with the President and his wife, in her own way as much a personality as her husband and equally nice. In the interim between these two visits Shoghi Effendi had sent to the President some Bahá'í books which he had promised him and these had been acknowledged with the thanks of the President and the assurance that he would read them with great interest. Ever meticulous in all matters, Shoghi Effendi wrote on June 3rd to the President: "I wish to thank you and Mrs. Ben Zvi for your kind hospitality. Mrs. Rabbani and I enjoyed our visit with you very much, and I feel sure that this opportunity we have had of visiting with you our Bahá'í Holy Places and calling upon you in the capital of Israel has served to reinforce the bonds of affection and esteem which unite the Bahá'ís to the people and Government of Israel. With kind regards to you and Mrs. Ben Zvi..." Thus ended another memorable chapter in the process of winning recognition for the Faith at its World Centre.*

Comments

December 16. On this date in 1912, the Troy, New York Press published an article stating "'Abdu'l-Bahá was imprisoned for twenty years in a Turkish dungeon because of the unpopularity of his doctrines in that country ... it is said that his following now numbers over 10,000,000."

Original file: 0506.html (position #84)

December 16. On this date in 1912, the Troy, New York Press published an article stating "During his stay in this country he won over to his belief thousands of converts, including many women prominent in social circles. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was imprisoned for twenty years in a Turkish dungeon because of the unpopularity of his doctrines in that country, but his faith in the universal religion is unshaken, and it is said that his following now numbers over 10,000,000."

> *'Abdu'l-Bahá, the venerable Persian who has been touring the United States expounding his new doctrine of world peace and unity of religion, has departed for London, where he will continue his work. During his stay in this country he won over to his belief thousands of converts, including many women prominent in social circles. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was imprisoned for twenty years in a Turkish dungeon because of the unpopularity of his doctrines in that country, but his faith in the universal religion is unshaken, and it is said that his following now numbers over 10,000,000.*

Comments

December 16. On this date in 1922, Shoghi Effendi cabled American Bahá'ís. Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum notes "After his breakdown and withdrawal for a period of time during 1922, he cabled America on 16 December, after his return to Haifa, 'The onward march of the Cause hath not been ...'"

Original file: 0505.html (position #83)

December 16. On this date in 1922, Shoghi Effendi cabled American Bahá'ís. Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum notes in her book *The Priceless Pearl*, "After his breakdown and withdrawal for a period of time during 1922, he cabled America on 16 December, after his return to Haifa, 'The onward march of the Cause hath not been, nor can it ever be stayed. I pray the Almighty that my efforts, now refreshed and reassured, may with your undiminished support lead it to glorious victory.'"

From Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Priceless Pearl*...

> *A mutually trusting and tender relationship grew up between the young Guardian and those he called "the children of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" from the very first moment they heard he had been named the Master's successor. When the provisions of His Will were promulgated, after its official reading on 7 January 1922, the national body, still known as the "Bahá'í Temple Unity" or "Executive Board", cabled him on 20 January "American rejoices appointment offers you its devoted services co-operation." They were both young, the Guardian and the American Community, and there is something about the way they grew up together, in his ministry, that is deeply moving. After his breakdown and withdrawal for a period of time during 1922, he cabled America on 16 December, after his return to Haifa, "The onward march of the Cause hath not been, nor can it ever be stayed. I pray the Almighty that my efforts, now refreshed and reassured, may with your undiminished support lead it to glorious victory." The National Assembly replied on the 19th "Your Message refreshed and revivified every heart like unto the refunctioning of the body of oneness may the power of a sustained unity in America be your ever present help our love loyalty devoted co-operation and happiness to you."*

Comments

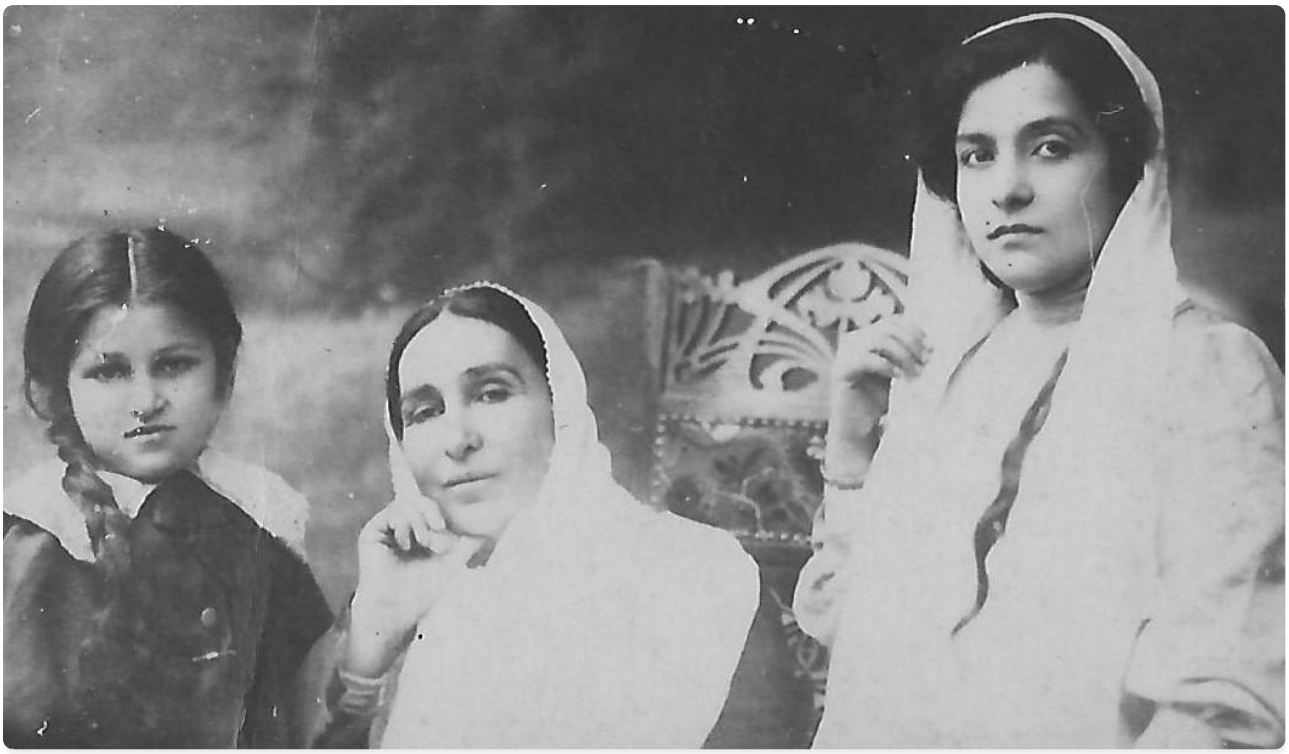
December 16. On this date in 1921, subsequent to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in Acre on November 28, Shoghi Effendi left England for Palestine accompanied by Lady Blomfield and his eldest sister, Ruhangiz, who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker.

Original file: 0504.html (position #82)

December 16. On this date in 1921, subsequent to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in Acre on November 28, 1921, Shoghi Effendi left England for Palestine accompanied by Lady Blomfield and his eldest sister, Ruhangiz, who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker.

At the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in Acre on November 28, 1921, Shoghi Effendi was a twenty-four-year-old student enrolled at Balliol College, Oxford. Upon reading the telegram announcing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death, in the home of Wellesley Tudor Pole who was Secretary of the London Local Spiritual Assembly, Shoghi Effendi passed out. Only after spending a few days with John Esslemont did Shoghi Effendi leave England, on December 16, 1921, accompanied by Lady Blomfield and his eldest sister, Ruhangiz, who he would

later declare a Covenant-breaker.



Comments

Shaykh_Hadi: You're linking to a Covenant breaking website.

December 16. On this date in 1998, the Universal House of Justice sent all National Spiritual Assemblies in Africa as well as the International Teaching Centre, the Board of Counsellors in Africa, and all Counsellors in Africa, a document titled "Aspects of Traditional African Culture."

Original file: 0503.html (position #81)

December 16. On this date in 1998, the Universal House of Justice sent all National Spiritual Assemblies in Africa as well as the International Teaching Centre, the Board of Counsellors in Africa, and all Counsellors in Africa, a document titled "Aspects of Traditional African Culture."

December 16. On this date in 1998, the UHJ sent all NSAs in Africa a document titled "Aspects of Traditional African Culture."

Comments

December 16. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi cabled "Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers...God's avenging hand struck down in the last two months, Avarih, Fareed and Falah."

Original file: 0502.html (position #80)

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>
> *The first of the above named will be condemned by posterity as being* ***the most shameless, vicious, relentless apostate*** *in the annals of the Faith, who, through ceaseless vitriolic attacks in recorded voluminous writings and close alliance with its traditional enemies, assiduously schemed to blacken its name and subvert the foundations of its institutions.*
>
> *The second, history will recognize as one of the* ***most perfidious among the kinsmen*** *of the interpreters of the Center of the Covenant, who,* ***driven by ungovernable cupidity****, committed acts causing agonies of grief and distress to the beloved Master and culminating in open association with breakers of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant in the Holy Land.*
>
> *The third will be chiefly remembered by the* ***pride, obstinacy and insatiable ambition*** *impelling him to violate the spiritual and administrative precepts of the Faith.*
>
> *All three, however* ***blinded by perversity****, could not have failed to perceive, as their infamous careers approached their end, the futility of their opposition and measure their own loss by the degree of progress and consolidation of the triumphant administrative order so magnificently celebrated in the course of the festivities of the recently concluded Holy Year.*

Avarih (literally "the Wanderer") was a Baha'i missionary, journalist, author and teacher who spent 18 years as missionary. He was a close companion of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who conferred on him the titles of "Raʾīs-al-moballeḡīn" (Chief of Missionaries) and "Avarih."

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Original file: 0501.html (position #79)

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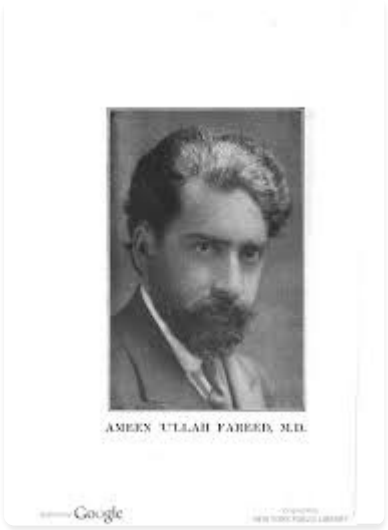

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For the picture titled Ameen U. Fareed 2 *[picture caption: 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Persian — prophet and apostle of the Bahá'u'lláh religion and his retinue, after their arrival in Denver yesterday. Left to right: Mirja Mohmoul, the scribe; Fingeta, the Japanese cook; Ahmad Sohrab, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Dr. Ameen U. Fareed, the interpreter, and Sayid Asad*

O'llah.]

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Comments

December 17. On this date in 2000, the First International Conference on Modern Religions and Religious Movements in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the Babi and Baha'i Faiths, co-sponsored by the Chair in Baha'i Studies at the Hebrew University and Landegg Academy, began.

Original file: 0499.html (position #77)

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> *JERUSALEM — Some 54 scholars of religion -- Jewish, Muslim, Christian,*

Mormon and Baha'i-- gathered in December at the Hebrew University to discuss the impact of modernism on their traditions. The conference, co-sponsored by the Chair in Baha'i Studies at the Hebrew University's Faculty of Humanities and Landegg Academy, has advanced Baha'i studies as an independent field of academic study and enriched the dialogue on the core values common to the monotheistic faiths.

The First International Conference on Modern Religions and Religious Movements in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the Babi and Baha'i Faiths, was held from 17 to 21 December 2000 and focused on common approaches within Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the Baha'i Faith toward the philosophical, social and psychological challenges of modernity.

"Religious studies often deal with the origins or history of religions. For example we study the origins of Islam or medieval Judaism," said Yair Zakovitch, Dean of the Hebrew University's Faculty of Humanities. "But the study of religion in modern times is so relevant, so important to the lives of people. It was very significant that these scholars, despite the delicate political situation, were able to gather in Jerusalem to discuss their commonalities and appreciate their differences. People are generally suspicious, and the walls of suspicion collapsed."

The President of the Hebrew University, Menachem Magidor, described to the conference participants his vision of making the Hebrew University into a preeminent center for the study of religion, with research centers devoted to each of the monotheistic faiths. "The Chair in Baha'i Studies is the first link in this chain," he said.

Moshe Sharon, the holder of the Chair in Baha'i Studies and co-convenor of the conference, said that the field of Baha'i studies is emerging as an independent area of academic inquiry and that this was the first conference convened by a major international university for the study of the Baha'i Faith and its relationship to its sister faiths.

"Through this conference," said Dr. Sharon, "the Hebrew University has declared its interest in Baha'i studies and its recognition of the importance of this field alongside Jewish, Christian and Islamic studies."

The other co-convenor of the conference was Hossain Danesh, the Rector of Landegg Academy, a Baha'i-sponsored institution of higher education in

Switzerland.

"The conference focused on fundamental issues that are common to religions, held in a city and at a time when religious conflict in political terms was considerable," Dr. Danesh said.

In his keynote address Dr. Danesh reviewed the common elements of the monotheistic religions that have made them cornerstones of civilizations, as well as some of the teachings and principles of the Baha'i Faith that address challenges unique to the modern age. He presented President Magidor with a volume of fine pen and ink drawings of Baha'i holy places in the Old City of Acre by the Persian architect and draftsman Hushang Seyhoun.

Other presentations and panel discussions were grouped around themes such as "Religion in Modern Times: Philosophical, Social and Psychological Reflections," "Mysticism and Messianism," "Eschatology and Ethics," "Tradition, Renewal and Reform," and "Religion and the Realm of Science." Most of the panelists spoke on aspects of Judaism or the Baha'i Faith, but there were also contributions on Sufism, the Wahhabi movement, modern Islam, and Mormonism.

The participants came mainly from the United States and Israel, but also from Canada, Denmark, Russia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and the United Kingdom. Prof. Degui Cai from China's Shandong University gave a presentation on the fundamental principles of the Baha'i Faith and their relevance to Chinese society.

The final panel discussion, on "Contemporary Meeting of Ultimate Differences," featured presentations about African Christians in Israel and about the Baha'i Faith, Christianity and indigenous religions in the Pacific islands. The panel closed with a presentation by Dr. Amnon Netzer of the Hebrew University on "The Jews and the Baha'i Faith." A Jew of Iranian background, Prof. Netzer spoke about the conditions that led as many as ten percent of Iran's Jews to convert to the Baha'i Faith.

"The courteous talk, in which Dr. Netzer showed great respect for those who converted, created an atmosphere of interfaith reconciliation for the audience, which included several Israeli Jews with Baha'i relatives," said Robert Stockman, Coordinator of the Institute for Baha'i Studies in Wilmette, Illinois.

Another significant element of the conference was the participation of many young

scholars alongside well-known and outstanding professors and scholars in the field of religious studies.

"The juxtaposition of youth and experience was very insightful and promising for the future of religious studies. It demonstrated that there are fine minds coming up, and this augurs well for the emergence of new insights into the role of religion in the development of civilization," said Dr. Danesh said.

The conference also featured a number of cultural activities. The opening day closed with a program of classical music by the King David String Ensemble, one of the foremost chamber music groups in Israel. Among the selections they performed was a piece well known to Baha'is, "Dastam Bigir Abdu'l-Baha," which the composer had arranged especially for the occasion.

Kiu Haghighi, a Persian Baha'i and master of the santour, closed the conference with a virtuoso performance of an original piece he composed for the event.

On the final day of the conference, 21 December, the participants made a special trip to the Baha'i World Center in Haifa and Acre. They visited the Shrine of the Bab and toured the nearly completed garden terraces stretching above and below the Shrine on the slopes of Mount Carmel. After a luncheon at the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, they visited the Shrine of Baha'u'llah and the Baha'i holy places in Acre.

A compilation of articles based on the proceedings of the conference will be published during the coming year, and many of the papers will be made available through the Landegg Academy Web site, www.landegg.org.

The Hebrew University and Landegg Academy have agreed to sponsor annual conferences of this nature, with the venue alternating between Jerusalem and the Landegg campus in Wienacht, Switzerland. The overarching theme of this series of conferences will be "Religion and Science." The next conference is planned for late January 2002 at Landegg.

The Chair in Baha'i Studies at the Hebrew University was established in 1999 as the first academic chair in the world devoted to the study of the Baha'i Faith. Other academic centers and programs, most notably the Baha'i Chair for World Peace at the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management, have been established to study Baha'i perspectives on and contributions to other academic disciplines.

> *"The systematic study of Baha'i religion, history and literature was introduced into the Hebrew University in the 1990s," wrote Prof. Sharon in the published proceedings of the dedication ceremonies for the Baha'i Chair, held at Mount Scopus and at the Baha'i World Center in Haifa in June 1999.*
>
> *"The magnitude of the material involved, and the vast scope of research which has already been done in the field persuaded the University of the necessity of creating a proper framework for research and teaching designed to accommodate the future development of the field within the academic vision of the University of forming a cluster of research centers dedicated to the study of the major religions of the world."*

Moshe Sharon was born in Haifa on December 18, 1937. He joined the faculty of Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1965 and would go on to earn a Ph.D. at the same institution in 1971. He served as an Arab Affairs adviser to Prime Minister Menachem Begin and served in the Ministry of Defense, during which took part in the negotiations for peace with Egypt. Sharon established the Centre of Jewish Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, which he directed while serving as director of the World Zionist Organization branch in Johannesburg. In 1999 he was appointed to the chair of Bahá'í Studies at Hebrew University. Sharon serves as a policy expert for the Ariel Center for Policy Research. He and his wife, Judy, have six children.

Moshe Sharon has written about early Islamic history and the development of Shia Islam. He is a specialist in Arabic epigraphy and papyrology, with his opus being *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palaestinae*. In 2005 he published the first translation into Hebrew of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* and included a study of the history and theology of the religion.

Frequently interviewed by Israeli media, he has been called "Israel's greatest Middle East scholar." Among his political views is that there is "no possibility of peace between Israel and the Palestinians whatsoever, for ever" and that peace agreements with Arabs are "pieces of paper, parts of tactics, strategies...with no meaning." Moshe Sharon opposed the Oslo peace accords and believes the dismantling the Israeli settlements, which he terms "expulsions," serve to "increase the appetite of the other side and only achieve the killing of Jews." He blames the Bosnians' being Muslim for the Yugoslav conflict of the 1990's and argues that "The only way to avoid military confrontation with Iran is to leave this military confrontation to powers bigger than Israel."

In the Israeli documentary film "Bahais in My Backyard," during an interview, Moshe Sharon denies the existence of Bahá'u'lláh's descendants in Israel. Despite Sharon's denial of the existence of such relatives, they do exist, and one of Bahá'u'lláh's great-granddaughters, Nigar Bahai Amsalem, is featured in the film. The denial of these descendants, no less by a purported academic who is "Chair of Bahá'í Studies" at arguably Israel's best university, is curious.

Moshe Sharon has close connections with the Bahá'í Administrative Order. For example, in December 2000, Moshe Sharon and Hossain Danesh, the Rector of the now-defunct Landegg Academy, a Bahá'í-sponsored institution of higher education in Switzerland, co-convened the First International Conference on Modern Religions and Religious Movements in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the Babi and Baha'i Faiths at Hebrew University. The conference was covered in a Bahá'í World News Service article.

Comments

Baha'i History December 17. On this date in 2017, Hartmut Grossmann died in Germany. He served on the NSAs of Germany and Finland and as a Continental Counsellor. In 1988 was appointed to the ITC where he served until being elected to the UHJ in 2003. He served in the UHJ until retiring in 2008.

Original file: 0498.html (position #76)

December 17. On this date in 2017, Hartmut Grossmann died in Germany. He was born into a prominent German Bahá'í family in 1933. His father, Hermann, was a Hand of the Cause of God and both his parents served on the German-Austrian NSA. Hartmut Grossman served on the NSAs of Germany from 1963 to 1969 and Finland from 1977 to 1980. He was appointed a Continental Counsellor in 1980 and in 1988 was appointed to the International Teaching Centre where he served until being elected to the UHJ in 2003. He served in the UHJ until retiring in 2008.

On August 28, 2012, UHJ wrote a response about statements by Hartmut Grossmann that "The Lesser Peace will be established by 2021 (war forbidden) and that by then the leaders of the world will gather to investigate alternatives after a period of great suffering and will turn to the Baha'is to reorganize the world as the Baha'i Faith has shown only to be of service to mankind and is established around the world. The troops will then come in even in greater numbers" and "The lesser peace will be established by 2021 when world leaders recognize that only the Baha'is offer a world system established all over the world which is service-minded and concerned for all people's well-being."

Comments

December 17. On this date in 1922, two days after returning to Haifa, Shoghi Effendi sent a cable, his first, to the "Blest and beloved ones of 'Abdu'l-Bahá!" On April 5, 1922, some four months after returning to Haifa subsequent to the death of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi left Haifa with his el

Original file: 0497.html (position #75)

December 17. On this date in 1922, two days after returning to Haifa, Shoghi Effendi sent a cable, his first, to the "Blest and beloved ones of `Abdu'l-Bahá!" On April 5, 1922, some four months after returning to Haifa subsequent to the death of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi left Haifa with his eldest cousin and close friend, Ruhi Afnan who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker, for rest and relaxation in the Bernese Oberland in the Swiss Alps. In his absence, Shoghi Effendi placed Bahíyyih Khánum as Head of the Cause, and later that month the "Star of the West" magazine would publish letters from Shoghi Effendi

and Bahíyyih Khánum explaining the situation. Ruhi Afnan would be declared a Covenant-breaker in a series of cablegrams in the 1950's.

> *17 December 1922*
>
> *Blest and beloved ones of 'Abdu'l-Bahá!*
>
> *To have been unable, owing to sad circumstances over which I have had no control, to keep in close and constant touch with you, the beloved children of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, since His passing from this world, is to me a cause of sad surprise and deep and bitter regret. To say that ever since the Dawn of a New Day has broken upon me I have in the least felt reluctant or disinclined to enter into relationship with every one of you, or felt indifferent to a Cause which is so close and dear to your hearts, would indeed betray every sentiment of love and fellowship which animates every one of us in our servitude to His Holy Threshold. It was rather my utter exhaustion, my profound feelings of sorrow, the overwhelming sense of my own position and responsibilities and the extreme pressure of work that have caused me to maintain such a long silence and seem forgetful of those brave and valiant lovers of the Master in that land.*
>
> *Of the thoughts that sustained and comforted me during my hours of restful retirement was the realization, never dismissed from my mind, that in the German friends the Master will surely find loyal and grateful children who will repay the tender love and paternal care which He had for them with a devotion and service, so profound and lasting that will prove worthy of the many blessings that have been theirs in the past.*
>
> *The news of your most spiritual gatherings, since the Great Plan of the Master as revealed in His Testament has been unfolded to our eyes; the formation and functioning of the National Body with efficiency and harmony; the extension of your activities; the widening of your correspondence; the generous and spontaneous help you have extended us in connection with our difficulties in the Holy Land and above all the spirit of ready devotion and ever-increasing zeal which is back of it all--these are sweet thoughts that cheer the bereaved Ladies of the Holy Household and encourage here and abroad the many friends who look forward to the hour when all the Master has promised His friends in Germany will come to be fulfilled.*

> *Having returned to the Holy Land with a renewed vigour and a refreshed spirit, I shall not fail with the help of the Master to do my part in enabling you to carry on further and still further the Glorious Standard of Bahá to the very heart and uttermost confines of Germany and thus hasten the Day when the Spirit of Faith and Peace as revealed in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh will fill the world and the darkness of strife be no more.*
>
> *In sweet remembrance at the Three Holy Shrines of your labours of love for His Cause, I am and remain your brother and coworker in His service.*

From "Star of the West" magazine, Volume 14, Issue 4...

Important Letters from Shoghi Effendi and Bahaeyeh Khanum, the Greatest Holy Leaf

Photograph of the original letter written by Shoghi Effendi and translation of some, sent to the STAR OF THE WEST by his honor Mirza Hadi Shirazi, the noble father of Shoghi Effendi, through Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi. This photograph and the following original letter (from the Greatest Holy Leaf) reached this country after the same recently sent out by the National Spirtual Assembly to the Assemblies throughout America:

> *He Is God!*
>
> *This servant, after that grievous event and great calamity—the ascension of His Holiness Abdul-Baha to the Abha Kingdom—has been so stricken with grief and pain and so entangled in the troubles (created) by the enemies of the Cause of God, that I consider my presence here, at such a time and in such an atmosphere, is not in accordance with the fulfillment of my important and sacred duties.*
>
> *For this reason, unable to do otherwise, I have left for a time the affairs of the Cause, both at home and abroad, under the supervision of the Holy Family and the headship of the Greatest Holy Leaf—may my soul be a sacrifice to her—until, by the Grace of God, having gained health, strength, self-confidence and spiritual energy, and having taken into my hands, in accordance with my aim and desire, entirely and regularly the work of service, I shall attain to my utmost spiritual and aspiration.*
>
> *The servant of His Threshold, (April, 22) (Signed) SHOGHI*

Letter from the Greatest Holy Leaf, Bahaeyeh Khawwm, sent to the Editors of the STAR OF THE WEST:

He Is God!

To the servants of the Blessed Beauty and the dear friends of His Holiness Abdul-Baha!

Although the hearts of the people of Bahá are intensely burning on account of the great calamity (of the ascension of Abdul-Baha), and the sobbing and sighing of the friends have reached the ears of the Supreme Concourse and the Hosts of Holiness in the Abha (Most Glorious) Paradise, yet, because this day is the day of service and this hour is the hour of diffusing the fragrances, the friends of God must, like a bright flame, arise in service to the Cause of God and surpass one another (in service). They should be like penetrating meteors, expelling every disloyal covenant-breaker, in order that in the Preserved Tablet of God, they may be recorded with the group who has fulfilled the Covenant and Testament of God.

His Holiness, the Guardian of the Cause of God, the Primal Branch, the joy of the people of Baha—Shoghi Effendi—because of this great calamity, most painful event, infinite sorrow and the severity of the effect upon himself—has desired to travel for several days, that he may regain his health and have rest. Then he will return to the Holy Threshold, arise in service to the Cause of God and perform his duties.

According to a letter written by his own hand, which is enclosed, he has appointed this prisoner to supervise and manage the affairs of the Cause, through consultation with the Holy Family, during his absence. Therefore, this perishable one, temporarily, has organized an assembly to act according to the advice of the souls who were appointed and nominated by him—His Holiness Shoghi Effendi.

I am hopeful, that during the period of his absence, the friends of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful may show forth great efforts in the progress of the Cause of God, and the Cause of God may spread rapidly.

Verily, He is Compassionate and Merciful to His Servants.

(Signature and seal) BAHAEYEH.

(Month of Shaban, 1340—April 1922. Translated by Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi, Chicago,

> *May, 1922.)*

The cablegrams concerning the declaration of Ruhi Afnan a Covenant-breaker include one from December 13, 1951 titled "Old and New Covenant-Breakers" where Shoghi Effendi says, "Evidences multiplying attesting Ruhi's increasing rebelliousness, efforts exerted my eldest sister pave way fourth alliance members family Siyyid 'Alí involving marriage his granddaughter with Ruha's son and personal contact recently established my own treacherous, despicable brother Riaz with Majdi'd-Din, redoubtable enemy Faith, former henchman Muhammad-'Ali, Archbreaker Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant. Another cablegram sent May 17, 1953, titled "Treacherous Ruhi Afnan", stated "Treacherous Ruhi Afnan, not content with previous disobedience, correspondence with Ahmad Sohrab, contact with old Covenant-breakers, sale, in conjunction with other members of family, of sacred property purchased by Founder of Faith, and allowing his sister to marry son of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's enemy, is now openly lecturing on Bahá'í movement, claiming to be its exponent and is misrepresenting the teachings and deliberately causing confusion in minds of authorities and the local population. Inform National Assemblies."

Comments

December 17. On this date in 1928, Shoghi Effendi wrote Jessie Revell, a member of the International Bahá'í Council "Wherever you are, the Beloved will watch over you and sustain you, and you must feel encouraged to realize that your services, your faith and constancy, will in time be fully rewarde

Original file: 0496.html (position #74)

December 17. On this date in 1928, Shoghi Effendi wrote Jessie Revell, a member of the International Bahá'í Council, serving as its Treasurer, "I trust and pray that some day you may be enabled to visit Persia, and there render a distinct service to the cause... Wherever you are, the Beloved will watch over you and sustain you, and you must feel encouraged to

realize that your services, your faith and constancy, will in time be fully rewarded."

Jessie Revell, along with her sister Ethel, became a Bahá'í in Philadelphia around 1906 through Mrs. Annie McKinney, when she attended the firesides of Mrs. Isabella D. Brittingham. On the evening when Jessie first heard Mrs. Brittingham speak on the Faith, Jessie followed her to the door as the speaker departed and said, 'I cannot remember all you said tonight, but I want what you have!'

Jessie Revell was once addressed by 'Abdu'l-Baha in these words:

> *"O thou who art firm in the Covenant! ... Notwithstanding the lack of time, I write thee this letter that thou mayest know how dear thou art to me. As thou art brilliant and pure and hast no wish but to serve the Cause of God and promulgate the divine teachings, I pray and entreat at the threshold of God and beg for thee limitless assistance and bounty. ... Thou must engage in those regions, day and night, in service. ... As to the children with whom thou art speaking, thy pure breath will undoubtedly exert its influence upon them. ..." ('Abdu'l-Baha, Star of the West, vol. X, p. 317)*

Jessie Revell's brilliant record of service to the Cause of Baha'u'llah, extending from early in the century, came to an end with her passing in Haifa on April 14, 1966. Her story is best told in the words of her devoted sister, Ethel Revell.

"My mother, my sister and I first heard of the Faith in Philadelphia -- it was approximately 1906 -- through Mrs. Annie McKinney, and attended the firesides of Mrs. Isabella D. Brittingham. On the evening when Jessie first heard Mrs. Brittingham speak on the Faith, Jessie followed her to the door as the speaker departed and said, 'I cannot remember all you said tonight, but I want what you have!' When she accepted the Faith she wrote to 'Abdu'l-Baha and mentioned that our father had passed away when we were very young. The Master replied -- I believe in these exact words -- 'The real fatherhood is the spiritual fatherhood. Therefore rest thou assured that thou art the beloved daughter.'

"In the early days of her Baha'i life, as there was but little literature available to the friends, Jessie, who was then employed in an office, would spend her evenings typing copies of Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Baha and sharing them with the Baha'is, who in turn would recopy them and pass them along to other believers.

"Jessie's dearest wish was to be of service to the Cause. 'Abdu'l-Baha visited Philadelphia in June, 1912. After speaking to the friends on Sunday morning at the Rittenhouse Hotel where He was staying, the Master took a short walk, during which time Jessie and a brother visited the various newspaper offices with material on the Faith which appeared in the papers the following day.

"During the meeting at the hotel, 'Abdu'l-Baha said to our mother that He would see us at nine o'clock the following morning at our house. Excitedly, everyone spread the news and the humble home was crowded. The Master spoke to the friends most beautifully and touchingly about the life of Baha'u'llah. Afterwards He went upstairs, and each one had a brief interview with him. When Jessie's turn came, she said 'I would like to be of service in the Kingdom.' 'Abdu'l-Baha replied, 'You are a smiling angel; you will be of service in the Kingdom.'

"Jessie visited 'Abdu'l-Baha in New York City a few days before He sailed from America. As she was taking leave the Master said that He would see her again. Jessie always lived in the thought of again seeing Him on this earth. In 1921 she received a Tablet in which He told her she had permission to make her pilgrimage in the winter of that year. Everything was in order: the expense of her voyage was the loving gift of a Baha'i friend; her employer consented to her leave of absence and agreed to hold open her position until she returned; her plans were all made. When the news reached her of the ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha she was completely heartbroken. Slowly, painfully she reconciled herself to the realization that her meeting with the Master was not to be on this physical plane. At the suggest ion of Mrs. Brittingham she postponed her pilgrimage for a few years and was very happy she did so, because when she arrived in Haifa she was able to meet the beloved Guardian which would not have been the case had she gone at the time originally planned.

"One day during her pilgrimage Shoghi Effendi invited her to stroll up Mount Carmel with him to visit the Shrine of the Bab. On that walk he said that the Baha'is must make a superhuman effort. Jessie often said there was something about the way the Guardian said 'superhuman' that engraved it for all time in her heart.

"Jessie constantly searched for ways of meeting souls who were longing for truth. With this object in view she had just completed a course in public speaking when the invitation came to travel to Haifa to assist the beloved Guardian. When she told of receiving this cable, she said she believed she lost consciousness for a moment, it was so overwhelming."

A tribute to Jessie Revell by Mr. and Mrs. Lyall Hadden published in the Bulletin of the Spiritual Assembly of Philadelphia at the time of her death describes her early services in

that community:

“Jessie’s entire life was one of service to the Faith, first here in Pennsylvania where she served for many years on the Spiritual Assembly of Philadelphia and the regional teaching committee, and later in Haifa where she and Ethel were summoned by the Guardian in 1951.

“Her years of service in Haifa, her many travels throughout the world on behalf of the Faith, are well known to all, but we in Pennsylvania have a deeper knowledge of, and a great love for, this little person who gave of her time and energy so cheerfully and efficiently. No distance was too far for Jessie to travel; no demand upon her time too great in service to Baha’u’llah.

“When we first met the Revells back in 1936 both Jessie and Ethel were carrying out ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s instructions in a most energetic and able manner. We had just arrived in the Philadelphia area from New York where we had been briefly introduced to the Faith. Almost immediately upon our arrival Jessie, Ethel and their mother came to call upon us, and every week thereafter these dear and faithful souls traveled the twenty miles to our home to further our instruction in the Faith of Baha’u’llah. After we declared our faith they, true to the Master’s wish, continued to visit every Saturday morning to instruct our three small sons. So effective were their teaching methods that at one children’s session at Davison Baha’i School our boys were asked to refrain from raising their hands to answer questions and let some of the other children have the opportunity. ‘Thy pure breath will undoubtedly exert its influence upon them. ...’

“Many times we met the Revell sisters and drove them to Reading where they had engaged a room in order to hold Baha’i meetings. Whether one person attended, or a dozen, or no one at all, those two devoted believers were always there on the designated night, and our own knowledge was strengthened and deepened.”

It is fitting that Jessie Revell’s services in the Holy Land be glimpsed through the eyes of one of the countless pilgrims whose hearts she won. An account of her passing appeared in the Alaskan Baha’i News, September, 1966:

“Late in 1950 two self-effacing little ladies from Philadelphia, Ethel and Jessie Revell, received a cablegram: WELCOME YOUR PRESENCE HAIFA -- SHOGHI. These two lovely souls were overwhelmed and puzzled, but they soon began to pack. ...

“For Jessie, this was a return to the land of her heart’s desire. ... What kind of woman was this ‘little giant’, barely five feet tall, who earned the trust, love and admiration of Shoghi

Effendi, and became a loyal companion of Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum and the friend and counsellor of every pilgrim? The beloved Guardian received many letters from American believers but it was the rare Baha'i who, like Jessie, would write to him, as she did in 1948, to thank him for his peerless translation of Prayers and Meditations.

"En route to Haifa the Revell sisters found an additional opportunity to proclaim the Faith. Three hundred miles east of the Azores, a floating observance of World Religion Day was held on the S.S. LaGuardia by Jessie and Ethel. Fifty people of various nationalities attended in response to the invitation listed in the ship's calendar."

Jessie Revell's services in Haifa were manifold: she was entrusted by the Guardian shortly after her arrival with the task of sending and collecting all his mail; this was a task to which he attached great importance as during his absences from the Holy Land no one had access to him except his "postman" whose integrity must be of the highest order. Even after the Guardian's passing she continued to collect the mail, in spite of her age, until the election of the Universal House of Justice.

In 1951 she was appointed treasurer of the International Baha'i Council by the Guardian and after its election in 1961 continued to hold the same office. Her services to the Guardian and to the World Center in these and other capacities brought her in contact with many people in Haifa where she was widely known and respected as a Baha'i.

"How Jessie loved to be with the pilgrims," Ethel Revell testifies. "She loved to look after their comfort and received them with a loving welcome, visiting with them, helping them on their shopping trips. At times the pilgrims arrived very late at night from certain countries. On one occasion a group of dear pilgrims came at about eleven-thirty at night. It was raining heavily. They were shown their rooms and made comfortable by Jessie. The next morning Jessie awakened to find she had slept peacefully all night in a wet raincoat!"

A pilgrim writes, "She won the hearts of all the pilgrims and saw the best, the true Baha'i, in everyone. In her quiet, unassuming way she would seek every avenue to serve her beloved Faith. No task was too great or too small. Pilgrims around the world treasure the picture of 'Abdu'l-Baha in Philadelphia or some other small token from the Revell sisters. Dearly loved by the people of Haifa, they would voice concern: 'Please talk Miss Jessie into getting a car -- a little one will do; she goes back and forth so much; I worry for her.' A friend of 'Miss Jessie's' would get a special price in the souvenir shops. Everyone in Haifa knew her; everyone loved her. Her calm, assured manner, regardless of the turbulence about her, seemed to be in natural setting in Haifa. While the Shrines, of course, stand apart as the very core of pilgrimage, Haifa unfailingly brings to mind Jessie Revell."

Before his passing Shoghi Effendi had himself announced that Jessie Revell would attend the Intercontinental Conference to be held in the United States in 1958, in addition to the Hand of the Cause he had delegated to represent him on that occasion. In 1961 she accompanied Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum on her trip to Australia to open the Mother Temple of the Antipodes to public worship. When Amatu'l-Baha was taken ill, Jessie Revell, at her request, visited the New Zealand Baha'i community in her stead, bringing the spirit of the beloved Guardian to all the friends there.

"I trust and pray that some day you may be enabled to visit Persia, and there render a distinct service to the cause," Shoghi Effendi wrote to her on December 17, 1928. "Wherever you are, the Beloved will watch over you and sustain you, and you must feel encouraged to realize that your services, your faith and constancy, will in time be fully rewarded."

Ethel's words describe the joy her sister experienced in realizing this long-held hope:

"Persia and Turkey were the last countries which Jessie visited. She traveled to Iran just seven months before she passed away. To be in the land of Baha'u'llah was such a joy to her, to visit all the Holy Places such a sacred experience. Then too, the believers were so thoughtful, kind and hospitable in a quiet and efficient manner that she really felt at home. It seemed to me that with that accomplished, she in a way relaxed somewhat. A few days before she departed she said to me, 'Since I went to Persia, I seem to be living there all the time.'"

Jessie Revell died in Haifa on April 14, 1966.

Upon her death the Universal House of Justice cabled the following message:

> *WITH PROFOUND GRIEF ANNOUNCE PASSING JESSIE REVELL HER TIRELESS STEADFAST DEVOTION FAITH SINCE BEFORE MASTER'S VISIT AMERICAN CONTINENT EARNED LOVE TRUST ADMIRATION SHOGHI EFFENDI CROWNED BY APPOINTMENT INTERNATIONAL BAHA'I COUNCIL DISTINGUISHED BY SERVICE TREASURER BOTH APPOINTED ELECTED COUNCILS. URGE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS TRIBUTE UNFORGETTABLE EXEMPLARY SERVICES FAITH.*

Comments

December 17. On this date in 1985, the UHJ cabled "General Assembly...For first time name (of the) precious faith (of) Bahá'u'lláh (was) mentioned (in the) highest most widely representative international forum yet established thus fulfilling long-cherished wish (of the) beloved Guardian."

Original file: 0495.html (position #73)

December 17. On this date in 1985, the Universal House of Justice cabled all National Spiritual Assemblies stating U.N. "General Assembly...For first time name (of the) precious faith (of) Bahá'u'lláh (was) mentioned (in the) highest most widely representative international forum yet established thus fulfilling long-cherished wish (of the) beloved Guardian."

17 December 1985

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

WITH JOYFUL GRATEFUL HEARTS WE ACCLAIM UNPRECEDENTED RECOGNITION BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY THROUGH ADOPTION BY UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY *OF RESOLUTION MAKING SPECIFIC REFERENCE PERSECUTED FRIENDS IRAN.* ***FOR FIRST TIME NAME PRECIOUS FAITH BAHÁ'U'LLÁH MENTIONED HIGHEST MOST WIDELY REPRESENTATIVE INTERNATIONAL FORUM YET ESTABLISHED THUS FULFILLING LONG-CHERISHED WISH BELOVED GUARDIAN.*** *SIGNIFICANCE THIS MOMENTOUS DEVELOPMENT ALSO UNDERSCORED BY FACT THAT ONLY IN THREE INSTANCES BEFORE HAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ITSELF ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS CENSURING PARTICULAR COUNTRIES FOR BAD HUMAN RIGHTS RECORDS. PROCESS WHICH RESULTED SUCH A REMARKABLE OUTCOME BEGAN TWO YEARS AGO WITH DECISION UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO SEND REPRESENTATIVE IRAN INVESTIGATE VIOLATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS INCLUDING THOSE DIRECTLY AFFECTING BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY. THE COMMISSION DETERRED IN ITS INTENTION BY IRANIAN AUTHORITIES REFERRED ISSUE TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHERE MATTER WAS DISCUSSED FIRST IN THIRD COMMITTEE WHEN INTERESTS FAITH WERE VIGOROUSLY UPHELD BY REPRESENTATIVES VARIOUS COUNTRIES AND RESOLUTION WAS PROPOSED AND THEN IN PLENARY SESSION WHICH RATIFIED RESOLUTION ON 13 DECEMBER. NOTABLE CONSEQUENCE IS RETENTION ISSUE AGENDA GENERAL ASSEMBLY THUS PERMITTING INTENSIFICATION EFFORTS RELIEVE SITUATION SUFFERING BELIEVERS IRAN IN ANTICIPATION DAY COMPLETE EMANCIPATION FAITH GOD THAT LAND.* ***WARMLY COMMEND ACKNOWLEDGE UNTIRING EFFORTS UNITED NATIONS REPRESENTATIVES BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY RESOLUTELY SUPPORTED BY NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES ALL CONTINENTS.***

OCCURRING IN CONJUNCTION WITH PRESENTATION PEACE STATEMENT BY AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚḤÍYYIH KHÁNUM TO SECRETARY-GENERAL UNITED NATIONS ONLY FEW WEEKS BEFORE, WITH ONGOING DELIVERY SAME STATEMENT TO HEADS STATE THROUGHOUT WORLD AND WITH UNEQUIVOCAL PUBLIC DEFENSE IRANIAN BAHÁ'ÍS BY PRESIDENT UNITED

> *STATES AT HUMAN RIGHTS DAY CEREMONY, THIS INESTIMABLE ACHIEVEMENT DEFINITELY AFFIRMS EMERGENCE FAITH OBSCURITY HERALDS NEW PHASE IRREPRESSIBLE UNFOLDMENT DIVINELY APPOINTED WORLD ORDER BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.*
>
> *UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE*

Comments

December 18. On this date in 1937, Moshe Sharon, the first Chair in Bahá'í Studies at Hebrew University, was born. Called "Israel's greatest Middle East scholar," he has repeatedly voiced extremist political views and maintains close connections with the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

Original file: 0494.html (position #72)

December 18. On this date in 1937, Moshe Sharon, the first Chair in Bahá'í Studies at Hebrew University, was born. Called "Israel's greatest Middle East scholar," he has repeatedly voiced extremist political views and maintains close connections with the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

Moshe Sharon was born in Haifa in 1937. He joined the faculty of Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1965 and would go on to earn a Ph.D. at the same institution in 1971. He

served as an Arab Affairs adviser to Prime Minister Menachem Begin and served in the Ministry of Defense, during which took part in the negotiations for peace with Egypt. Sharon established the Centre of Jewish Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, which he directed while serving as director of the World Zionist Organization branch in Johannesburg. In 1999 he was appointed to the chair of Bahá'í Studies at Hebrew University. Sharon serves as a policy expert for the Ariel Center for Policy Research. He and his wife, Judy, have six children.

Moshe Sharon has written about early Islamic history and the development of Shia Islam. He is a specialist in Arabic epigraphy and papyrology, with his opus being *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palaestinae*. In 2005 he published the first translation into Hebrew of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* and included a study of the history and theology of the religion.

Frequently interviewed by Israeli media, he has been called "Israel's greatest Middle East scholar." Among his political views is that there is "no possibility of peace between Israel and the Palestinians whatsoever, for ever" and that peace agreements with Arabs are "pieces of paper, parts of tactics, strategies...with no meaning." Moshe Sharon opposed the Oslo peace accords and believes the dismantling the Israeli settlements, which he terms "expulsions," serve to "increase the appetite of the other side and only achieve the killing of Jews." He blames the Bosnians' being Muslim for the Yugoslav conflict of the 1990's and argues that "The only way to avoid military confrontation with Iran is to leave this military confrontation to powers bigger than Israel."

In the Israeli documentary film "Bahais in My Backyard," during an interview, Moshe Sharon denies the existence of Bahá'u'lláh's descendants in Israel. Despite Sharon's denial of the existence of such relatives, they do exist, and one of Bahá'u'lláh's great-granddaughters, Nigar Bahai Amsalem, is featured in the film. The denial of these descendants, no less by a purported academic who is "Chair of Bahá'í Studies" at arguably Israel's best university, is curious.

Moshe Sharon has close connections with the Bahá'í Administrative Order. For example, in December 2000, Moshe Sharon and Hossain Danesh, the Rector of the now-defunct Landegg Academy, a Bahá'í-sponsored institution of higher education in Switzerland, co-convened the First International Conference on Modern Religions and Religious Movements in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the Babi and Baha'i Faiths at Hebrew University. The conference was covered in a Bahá'í World News Service article.

JERUSALEM — Some 54 scholars of religion -- Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Mormon and Baha'i-- gathered in December at the Hebrew University to discuss the impact of modernism on their traditions. The conference, co-sponsored by the Chair in Baha'i Studies at the Hebrew University's Faculty of Humanities and Landegg Academy, has advanced Baha'i studies as an independent field of academic study and enriched the dialogue on the core values common to the monotheistic faiths.

The First International Conference on Modern Religions and Religious Movements in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the Babi and Baha'i Faiths, was held from 17 to 21 December 2000 and focused on common approaches within Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the Baha'i Faith toward the philosophical, social and psychological challenges of modernity.

"Religious studies often deal with the origins or history of religions. For example we study the origins of Islam or medieval Judaism," said Yair Zakovitch, Dean of the Hebrew University's Faculty of Humanities. "But the study of religion in modern times is so relevant, so important to the lives of people. It was very significant that these scholars, despite the delicate political situation, were able to gather in Jerusalem to discuss their commonalities and appreciate their differences. People are generally suspicious, and the walls of suspicion collapsed."

The President of the Hebrew University, Menachem Magidor, described to the conference participants his vision of making the Hebrew University into a preeminent center for the study of religion, with research centers devoted to each of the monotheistic faiths. "The Chair in Baha'i Studies is the first link in this chain," he said.

Moshe Sharon, the holder of the Chair in Baha'i Studies and co-convenor of the conference, said that the field of Baha'i studies is emerging as an independent area of academic inquiry and that this was the first conference convened by a major international university for the study of the Baha'i Faith and its relationship to its sister faiths.

"Through this conference," said Dr. Sharon, "the Hebrew University has declared its interest in Baha'i studies and its recognition of the importance of this field alongside Jewish, Christian and Islamic studies."

The other co-convenor of the conference was Hossain Danesh, the Rector of

Landegg Academy, a Baha'i-sponsored institution of higher education in Switzerland.

"The conference focused on fundamental issues that are common to religions, held in a city and at a time when religious conflict in political terms was considerable," Dr. Danesh said.

In his keynote address Dr. Danesh reviewed the common elements of the monotheistic religions that have made them cornerstones of civilizations, as well as some of the teachings and principles of the Baha'i Faith that address challenges unique to the modern age. He presented President Magidor with a volume of fine pen and ink drawings of Baha'i holy places in the Old City of Acre by the Persian architect and draftsman Hushang Seyhoun.

Other presentations and panel discussions were grouped around themes such as "Religion in Modern Times: Philosophical, Social and Psychological Reflections," "Mysticism and Messianism," "Eschatology and Ethics," "Tradition, Renewal and Reform," and "Religion and the Realm of Science." Most of the panelists spoke on aspects of Judaism or the Baha'i Faith, but there were also contributions on Sufism, the Wahhabi movement, modern Islam, and Mormonism.

The participants came mainly from the United States and Israel, but also from Canada, Denmark, Russia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and the United Kingdom. Prof. Degui Cai from China's Shandong University gave a presentation on the fundamental principles of the Baha'i Faith and their relevance to Chinese society.

The final panel discussion, on "Contemporary Meeting of Ultimate Differences," featured presentations about African Christians in Israel and about the Baha'i Faith, Christianity and indigenous religions in the Pacific islands. The panel closed with a presentation by Dr. Amnon Netzer of the Hebrew University on "The Jews and the Baha'i Faith." A Jew of Iranian background, Prof. Netzer spoke about the conditions that led as many as ten percent of Iran's Jews to convert to the Baha'i Faith.

"The courteous talk, in which Dr. Netzer showed great respect for those who converted, created an atmosphere of interfaith reconciliation for the audience, which included several Israeli Jews with Baha'i relatives," said Robert Stockman, Coordinator of the Institute for Baha'i Studies in Wilmette, Illinois.

Another significant element of the conference was the participation of many young scholars alongside well-known and outstanding professors and scholars in the field of religious studies.

"The juxtaposition of youth and experience was very insightful and promising for the future of religious studies. It demonstrated that there are fine minds coming up, and this augurs well for the emergence of new insights into the role of religion in the development of civilization," said Dr. Danesh said.

The conference also featured a number of cultural activities. The opening day closed with a program of classical music by the King David String Ensemble, one of the foremost chamber music groups in Israel. Among the selections they performed was a piece well known to Baha'is, "Dastam Bigir Abdu'l-Baha," which the composer had arranged especially for the occasion.

Kiu Haghighi, a Persian Baha'i and master of the santour, closed the conference with a virtuoso performance of an original piece he composed for the event.

On the final day of the conference, 21 December, the participants made a special trip to the Baha'i World Center in Haifa and Acre. They visited the Shrine of the Bab and toured the nearly completed garden terraces stretching above and below the Shrine on the slopes of Mount Carmel. After a luncheon at the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, they visited the Shrine of Baha'u'llah and the Baha'i holy places in Acre.

A compilation of articles based on the proceedings of the conference will be published during the coming year, and many of the papers will be made available through the Landegg Academy Web site, www.landegg.org.

The Hebrew University and Landegg Academy have agreed to sponsor annual conferences of this nature, with the venue alternating between Jerusalem and the Landegg campus in Wienacht, Switzerland. The overarching theme of this series of conferences will be "Religion and Science." The next conference is planned for late January 2002 at Landegg.

The Chair in Baha'i Studies at the Hebrew University was established in 1999 as the first academic chair in the world devoted to the study of the Baha'i Faith. Other academic centers and programs, most notably the Baha'i Chair for World Peace at the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management, have been established to study Baha'i perspectives on and

contributions to other academic disciplines.

"The systematic study of Baha'i religion, history and literature was introduced into the Hebrew University in the 1990s," wrote Prof. Sharon in the published proceedings of the dedication ceremonies for the Baha'i Chair, held at Mount Scopus and at the Baha'i World Center in Haifa in June 1999.

"The magnitude of the material involved, and the vast scope of research which has already been done in the field persuaded the University of the necessity of creating a proper framework for research and teaching designed to accommodate the future development of the field within the academic vision of the University of forming a cluster of research centers dedicated to the study of the major religions of the world."

Comments

December 18. On this date in 1988, Borrah Kavelin died. Born in Russia to a distinguished Jewish family, in 1950 he was elected to the NSA of the United States, where he served for 13 years until his election to the inaugural UHJ, where he served from 1963 until his death in 1988.

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H. Borrah Kavelin was born in Russia to a distinguished Jewish family on March 16, 1906. When he was three years old, the family immigrated to the United States and settled in

Denver, Colorado. His love of music drew him to New York, where his debut as an operatic tenor occurred on the stage of Carnegie Hall. During the Great Depression he was forced to leave his musical career and became secretary to the director of a real estate firm. His ability and diligence were soon recognized. He became a partner in the firm, and later became executive vice president and partner of the distinguished realty firm Durand Taylor and Company for 20 years.

From 1941 to 1950, H. Borrah Kavelin served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of New York City. In 1950 he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, where he served for 13 years until his election to the inaugural Universal House of Justice, where he served from 1963 until his death on December 18, 1988.

Comments

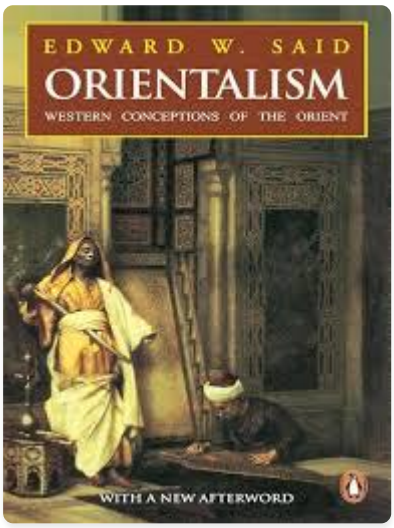
December 18. On this date in 1932, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated that "the Guardian wishes the Bahá'ís to bear in mind the repeated counsels of the Master that the friends should be on their guard when dealing with Easterners..."

Original file: 0492.html (position #70)

December 18. On this date in 1932, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated that "the Guardian wishes the Bahá'ís to bear in mind the repeated counsels of the Master that the friends should be on their guard when dealing with Easterners...Mere name of Bahá'í does not constitute a Bahá'í."

> *1406. The Mere Name of Bahá'í Does Not Constitute a Bahá'í*
>
> *"...the Guardian wishes the Bahá'ís to bear in mind the repeated counsels of the Master that* ***the friends should be on their guard when dealing with Easterners****. Not only should they trust no one unless he bears some letter of introduction from his Assembly but also after he is permitted in the Bahá'í group they should be very careful in their dealings with him. This does not mean that*

> *they should be unkind to him or have a constant suspicion that would gradually alienate him from the Cause, but to be on their guard lest he misuses their trust. The case of Ahmed Sohrab is a very good example of what an Easterner can do. He thinks to be doing shrewd business when a westerner would consider the act to be deceitful. As Bahá'u'lláh says often in His Tablets the friends should develop a flair wherewith they can detect the good from the evil person.* ***Mere name of Bahá'í does not constitute a Bahá'í.*** *His character also has to be Bahá'í."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, December 18, 1932)*



Comments

December 18. On this date in 1963, the UHJ wrote, "launching of the Nine Year Plan, the Universal House of Justice feels that it is timely to lay clearly before the Bahá’ís of all countries, the needs of the Fund at all its levels: local, national, continental and international."

Original file: 0491.html (position #69)

December 18. On this date in 1963, the Universal House of Justice wrote, "With the rapid approach of the launching of the Nine Year Plan, the Universal House of Justice feels that it is timely to lay clearly before the Bahá’ís of all countries, the needs of the Fund at all its levels: local, national, continental and international."

> *18 December 1963*
>
> *To the Bahá’ís of East and West*

Dear Friends,

With the rapid approach of the launching of the Nine Year Plan, the Universal House of Justice feels that it is timely to lay clearly before the Bahá'ís of all countries, the needs of the Fund at all its levels: local, national, continental and international.

The continual expansion of the Faith and the diversification of the activities of Bahá'í communities make it more and more necessary for every believer to ponder carefully his responsibilities and contribute as much and as regularly as he or she can. Contributing to the Fund is a service that every believer can render, be he poor or wealthy; for this is a spiritual responsibility in which the amount given is not important. It is the degree of the sacrifice of the giver, the love with which he makes his gift, and the unity of all the friends in this service which bring spiritual confirmations. As the beloved Guardian wrote in August 1957: "All, no matter how modest their resources, must participate. Upon the degree of self-sacrifice involved in these individual contributions will directly depend the efficacy and the spiritual influence which these nascent administrative institutions, called into being through the power of Bahá'u'lláh, and by virtue of the Design conceived by the Center of His Covenant, will exert."

Not only the individual's responsibility to contribute is important at this time, but also the uses to which the fund is put and the areas in which it is expended.

Much of the present rapid expansion of the Faith is taking place in areas of great poverty where the believers, however much they sacrifice, cannot produce sufficient funds to sustain the work. It is these very areas which are the most fruitful in teaching, and a sum of money spent here will produce ten times—even a hundred times—the results obtainable in other parts of the world. Yet in the past months the Universal House of Justice has had to refuse a number of appeals for assistance from such areas because there just was not enough money in the International Fund.

It should therefore be the aim of every local and national community to become not only self-supporting, but to expend its funds with such wisdom and economy as to be able to contribute substantially to the Bahá'í International Fund, thus enabling the House of Justice to aid the work in fruitful but impoverished areas, to assist new National Assemblies to start their work, to contribute to major international undertakings of the Nine Year Plan such as Oceanic Conferences, and

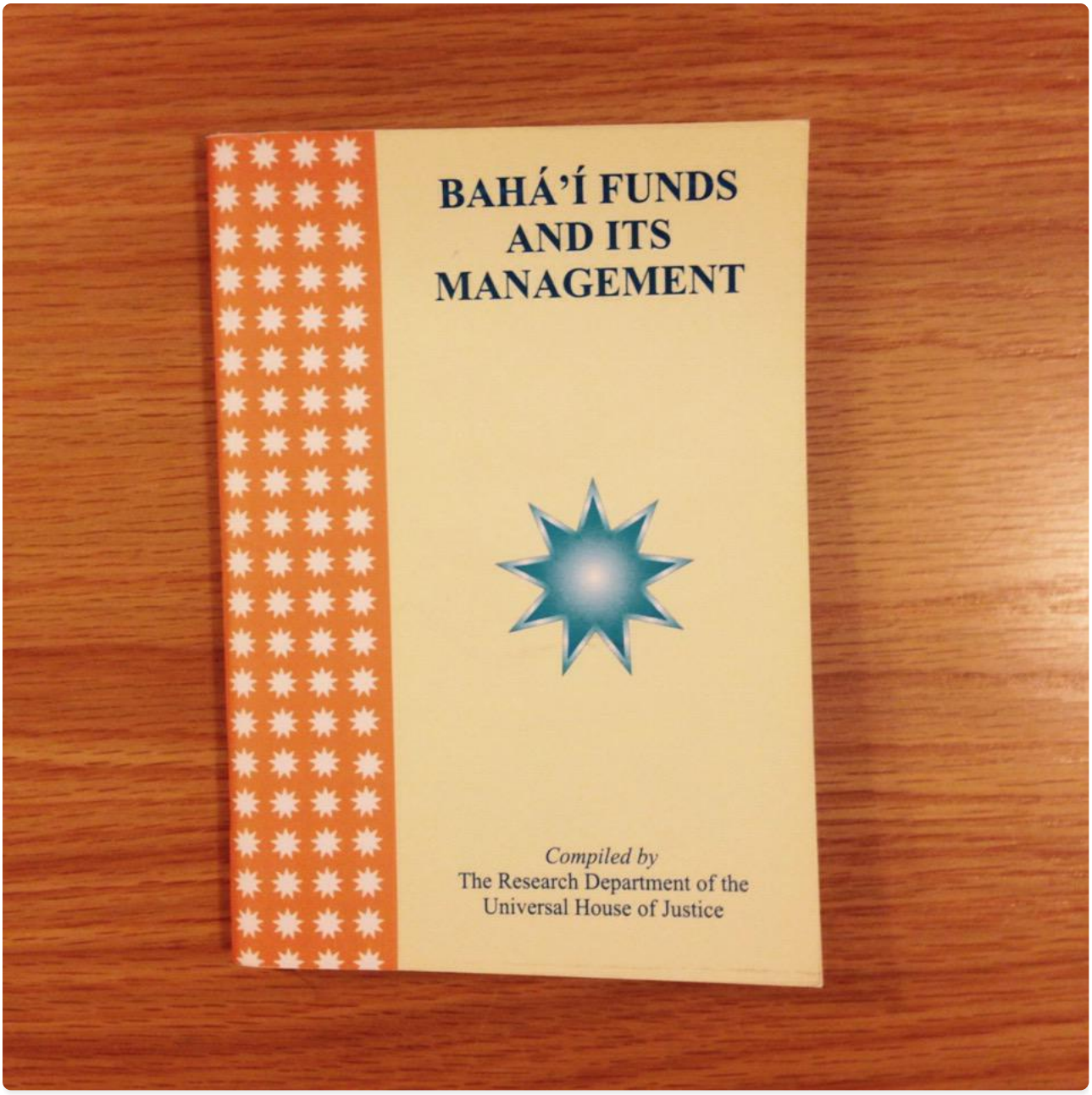
to carry forward the work of beautifying the land surrounding the Holy Shrines at the World Center of the Faith.

Nor should the believers, individually or in their Assemblies, forget the vitally important Continental Funds which provide for the work of the Hands of the Cause of God and their Auxiliary Boards. This divine institution, so assiduously fostered by the Guardian, and which has already played a unique role in the history of the Faith, is destined to render increasingly important services in the years to come.

In the midst of a civilization torn by strifes and enfeebled by materialism, the people of Bahá are building a new world. We face at this time opportunities and responsibilities of vast magnitude and great urgency. Let each believer in his inmost heart resolve not to be seduced by the ephemeral allurements of the society around him, nor to be drawn into its feuds and short-lived enthusiasms, but instead to transfer all he can from the old world to that new one which is the vision of his longing and will be the fruit of his labors.

With loving greetings,

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]


BAHÁ'Í FUNDS
AND ITS
MANAGEMENT
Compiled by
The Research Department of the
Universal House of Justice

Comments

December 19. On this date in 1982, the UHJ addressed "why the circulation of Bahá'í News should be restricted to Bahá'ís," noting that "A Bahá'í news bulletin assumes that the reader is a Bahá'í ... in some cases, may give the wrong impression to those not familiar with the Bahá'í teachings."

Original file: 0490.html (position #68)

December 19. On this date in 1982, a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico addressed "why the circulation of Bahá'í News should be restricted to Bahá'ís," responding that "A Bahá'í news bulletin assumes that the reader is a Bahá'í and it would therefore normally contain items which are purely of a domestic nature of no interest to the general public and which, in some cases, may give the wrong impression to those not familiar with the Bahá'í teachings."

360. Bahá'í Newsletters and Bulletins--Why Circulation is Restricted to "Bahá'ís Only"

"In reply to your inquiry of 18th November 1982 about Bahá'í newsletters and bulletins being for Bahá'ís only, we are asked by the Universal House of Justice to quote below from letters written by the Universal House of Justice or at its instruction to other National Assemblies which have asked similar questions.

'With reference to your letter of October 31st asking why the circulation of Bahá'í News should be restricted to Bahá'ís we wish to point out that the same reasons that make it necessary to restrict the attendance at a Nineteen Day Feast to Bahá'ís only apply also to the circulation of Bahá'í Newsletters.

'A Bahá'í news bulletin assumes that the reader is a Bahá'í and it would therefore normally contain items which are purely of a domestic nature of no interest to the general public and which, in some cases, may give the wrong impression to those not familiar with the Bahá'í teachings. However, there is no objection to the friends showing their newsletters to non-Bahá'ís if they so wish or find it useful at times. Furthermore, if the words 'For Bahá'ís Only' which appear on some newsletters are found to be offensive to the non-Bahá'í, there is no requirement for these words to appear on every copy of the newsletter.

'In answer to your query concerning the policy of keeping "Bahá'í News" for Bahá'ís only, the House of Justice instructs us to explain that the circulation of Bahá'í Newsletters is restricted to Bahá'ís because they are vehicles of news that is primarily of internal interest to the friends and the Assembly should be able to write freely to the believers without having to so word the information that it would be easily understandable to a non-Bahá'í reader. In other words, a Bahá'í newsletter is not secret but is an internal journal intended for an informed readership.'"

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico, December 19, 1982)

BAHA'I NEWS LETTER

THE BULLETIN OF THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

Office of the Secretary

169 CHRISTOPHER STREET, NEW YORK CITY

BAHÁ'Í NEWS

For Bahá'ís Only

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

GENERAL OFFICE: 536 SHERIDAN ROAD, WILMETTE, ILLINOIS

Comments

December 19. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi cabled "Faithless brother Hussein...recently further demeaned himself through marriage under obscure circumstances with lowborn Christian girl (in) Europe." He would later defend the use of the term "lowborn Christian girl."

Original file: 0489.html (position #67)

Hossein Rabbani, brother of Shoghi Effendi, with his wife Gerda and daughter Zia, 1958. Shoghi Effendi referred to Gerda as a "lowborn Christian girl"

December 19. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi cabled "Faithless brother Hussein...recently further demeaned himself through marriage under obscure circumstances with lowborn Christian girl (in) Europe." Shoghi Effendi would later defend the use of the term "lowborn Christian girl".

December 19. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi sent a cable, later also published in the March 1950 issue of *Bahá'í News*: "Faithless brother Hussein, already abased through dishonorable conduct over period (of) years followed by association with Covenant-breakers (in) Holy Land and efforts (to) undermine Guardian's position, recently further demeaned himself through marriage under obscure circumstances with **lowborn Christian girl** (in) Europe." Shoghi Effendi would later defend the use of the term "lowborn Christian girl".

Shoghi Effendi would later defend the use of the term "lowborn Christian girl" as follows: "Regarding his cable concerning Hussein: he has been very surprised to note that the terms 'low-born Christian girl ' and 'disgraceful alliance' should arouse any question; it seems to him that the friends should realize it is not befitting for the Guardian's own brother, the grandchild of the Master, an Afnán and Aghsán mentioned in the Will and Testament of the Master and of whom so much was expected because of his relation to the family of the Prophet, to marry an unknown girl, according to goodness knows what rite, who is not a believer at all."

> *December 19, 1949*
>
> *Faithless Brother Hussein*
>
> *Faithless brother Hussein, already abased through dishonorable conduct over period of years followed by association with Covenant-breakers in Holy Land and efforts to undermine Guardian's position, recently further demeaned himself through marriage under obscure circumstances with lowborn Christian girl in Europe. This disgraceful alliance, following four successive marriages by sisters and cousins with three sons of Covenant-breaker denounced repeatedly by 'Abdu'l-Bahá as His enemy, and daughter of notorious political agitator, brands them with infamy greater than any associated with marriages contracted by old Covenant-breakers whether belonging to family of Muḥammad-'Alí or Badí'u'lláh.*

Comments

December 19. On this date in 1922, four days after his return to Palestine after "his eight months' withdrawal," Shoghi Effendi cabled the High Commissioner for Palestine in Jerusalem: "Pray accept my best wishes and kind regards on my return to Holy Land and resumption of my official duties."

Original file: 0488.html (position #66)

A postcard with photos of Zionist leaders. Theodor Herzl and Herbert Samuel appear in center in Stars of David, linking them is the photo of Lord Balfour.

December 19. On this date in 1922, four days after his return to Palestine after "his eight months' withdrawal," Shoghi Effendi cabled the High Commissioner for Palestine in Jerusalem: "Pray accept my best wishes and kind regards on my return to Holy Land and resumption of my official duties."

This communication is referred to on page 70 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Priceless Pearl*, in *Chapter 2*, titled *The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Baha and its Immediate Consequences...*

> *On 19 December 1922 Shoghi Effendi had wired to the High Commissioner for Palestine in Jerusalem: "Pray accept my best wishes and kind regards on my return to Holy Land and resumption of my official duties." As there must have been a considerable buzz of gossip, ardently fed no doubt by the Covenant-breakers, about his eight months' withdrawal, this was a carefully calculated move on Shoghi Effendi's part as well as an act of courtesy.*

The High Commissioner for Palestine at that time was Herbert Samuel who, as High Commissioner, was the first Jew to govern the historic land of Israel in 2,000 years. His appointment was regarded by the Muslim-Christian Associations as the "first step in formation of Zionist national home in the midst of Arab people." Herbert Samuel welcomed the arrival of Jewish settlers under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association and recognised Hebrew as one of the three official languages of the Mandate territory.

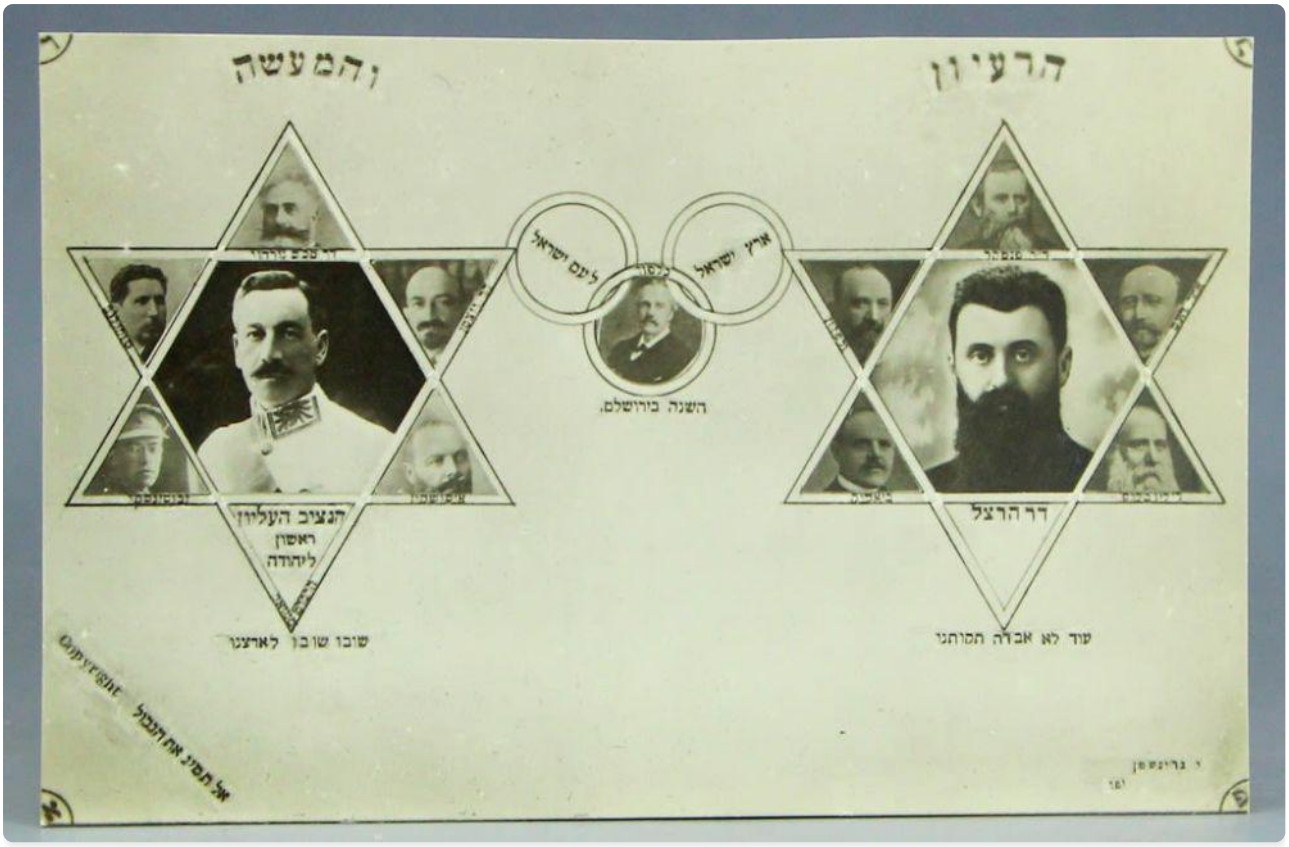
Shoghi Effendi had a warm and extended relationship with Herbert Samuel. For example, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum describes a letter Shoghi Effendi received from Herbert Samuel shortly after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death,

> *While Shoghi Effendi was thus occupied and was gathering his powers and beginning to write letters such as these to the Bahá'ís in different countries, he received the following letter from the High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, dated 24 January 1922:*
>
> *Dear Mr. Rabbani,*
>
> *I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Jan. 16., and to thank you for the kind expression it contains. It would be unfortunate if the ever to be lamented death of Sir 'Abdu'l-Bahá were to interfere with the completion of your Oxford career, and I hope that may not be the case. I am much interested to learn of the measures that have been taken to provide for the stable organization of the Bahá'í Movement. Should you be at any time in Jerusalem in would be a pleasure to me*

> *to see you here.*
>
> *Yours sincerely,*
>
> *Herbert Samuel*

On June 15, 1925, two weeks before the end of his term as High Commissioner, Shoghi Effendi addressed a message to Sir Herbert Samuel, High Commissioner for Palestine, as described by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum in *The Heart and Nerve Centre* in her book *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith*.

> *When Sir Herbert Samuel's term of office was drawing to a close the Guardian sent to him, on June 15, 1925, one of those messages that so effectively forged links of good will with the government, expressing his own and the Bahá'ís abiding sense of gratitude and deep appreciation of the "kind and noble attitude which Your Excellency has taken towards the various problems that have beset them since the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá ... The Bahá'ís ... remembering the acts of sympathy and good will which the Palestine Administration under your guidance has shown them in the past, will confidently endeavour to contribute their full share to the material prosperity as well as the spiritual advancement of a land so sacred and precious to them all."*


והמעשה
הרעיון
ארץ ישראל
לעם ישראל
השנה בירושלם.
הנציב העליון
ראשון
ליהודה
שיבו שובו לארצנו
עוד לא אבדה תקותנו
דר הרצל
Copyright
אל תסיר את הנכתב

Comments

December 19. On this date in 1997, the UHJ wrote "while it is disconcerting that Covenant-breaker material is being disseminated on the Internet...An important role that the Internet can play in this regard is to make authentic Bahá'í literature, on the Covenant and on Bahá'í teachings generally...

Original file: 0487.html (position #65)

December 19. On this date in 1997, the Universal House of Justice wrote "while it is disconcerting that Covenant-breaker material is being disseminated on the Internet...An important role that the Internet can play in this regard is to make authentic Bahá'í literature, on the Covenant and on Bahá'í teachings generally, easily available."

More generally, while it is disconcerting that Covenant-breaker material is being disseminated on the Internet, there is little that can or should be done to directly oppose such dissemination. Rather, the greatest protection to the Cause will be through ongoing deepening of the Bahá'í community in the Covenant and the history and teachings of the Faith. An important role that the Internet can play in this regard is to make authentic Bahá'í literature, on the Covenant and on Bahá'í teachings generally, easily available.

(From a letter dated 19 December 1997 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual)

Comments

December 19. On this date in 1971, the UHJ wrote "After many years difficult negotiations erection obelisk marking site future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár Mount Carmel completed thus fulfilling project initiated beloved Guardian early years crusade."

December 19. On this date in 1971, the UHJ wrote "After many years difficult negotiations erection obelisk marking site future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár Mount Carmel completed thus fulfilling project initiated beloved Guardian early years crusade."

> *Developments of Properties at the World Center*
>
> *19 December 1971*
>
> *To: All National Spiritual Assemblies*
>
> *Dear Bahá'í Friends,*
>
> *We share with you the following text of a cable which has been sent to the*

> *National Spiritual Assembly of the United States:*
>
> *Joyously announce further developments World Center. After many years difficult negotiations erection obelisk marking site future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár Mount Carmel completed thus fulfilling project initiated beloved Guardian early years crusade. Gardens Bahjí Haifa extended by development quadrant southeast Mansion Bahá'u'lláh and establishment formal garden southwest corner property surrounding Shrine Báb.*
>
> *With loving Bahá'í greetings,*
>
> *The Universal House of Justice*

Comments

December 19. On this date in 1974, the UHJ wrote the NSA "regarding an atheist who agreed to the Bahá'í ceremony but since he did not believe in God did not wish to repeat the marriage verse" that "No Bahá'í marriage can be valid without the recitation of the prescribed verse by both parties."

Original file: 0485.html (position #63)

December 19. On this date in 1974, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Ecuador "regarding an atheist who agreed to the Bahá'í ceremony but since he did not believe in God did not wish to repeat the marriage verse using the name of God" that "No Bahá'í marriage can be valid without the recitation of the prescribed verse by both parties."

> *1285. Marriage of Bahá'í to Atheist*

> *"The laws conditioning Bahá'í marriage are found in the 'Synopsis and Codification of the Kitab-i-Aqdas' under C., Laws of Personal Status, beginning on Page 39 of that publication. No Bahá'í marriage can be valid without the recitation of the prescribed verse by both parties."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice in answer to a letter from the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador regarding an atheist who agreed to the Bahá'í ceremony but since he did not believe in God did not wish to repeat the marriage verse using the name of God. Letter dated December 19, 1974)*

Comments

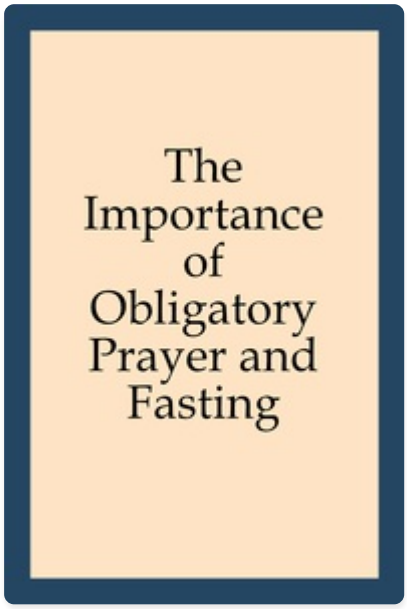
December 19. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the friends must observe the specific times for the remembrance of God, meditation, devotion and prayer, as it is highly unlikely, nay, rather impossible, that any enterprise should prosper and develop short of Divine bestowals...."

Original file: 0484.html (position #62)

December 19. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the friends must observe the specific times for the remembrance of God, meditation, devotion and prayer, as it is highly unlikely, nay, rather impossible, that any enterprise should prosper and develop short of Divine bestowals and confirmations...."

> *1498. Specific Time for Remembrance of God*

> *"...Moreover the friends must observe the specific times for the remembrance of God, meditation, devotion and prayer, as it is highly unlikely, nay, rather impossible, that any enterprise should prosper and develop short of Divine bestowals and confirmations...."*
>
> *(From a letter of the Guardian to the Bahá'ís of the East, December 19, 1923: Living the Life, p. 1)*



Comments

December 20. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi announced the death of "Archbreaker of Covenant" in a cablegram later published in "Messages to America."

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> *ARCHBREAKER OF COVENANT*
>
> *The Hand of Omnipotence has removed the archbreaker of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, his hopes shattered, his plottings frustrated, the society of his fellow-conspirators extinguished. God's triumphant Faith forges on, its unity unimpaired, its purpose unsullied, its stability unshaken. Such a death calls for neither exultation nor recrimination, but evokes overwhelming pity at so tragic a downfall unparalleled in religious history.*
>
> *Cablegram December 20, 1937*

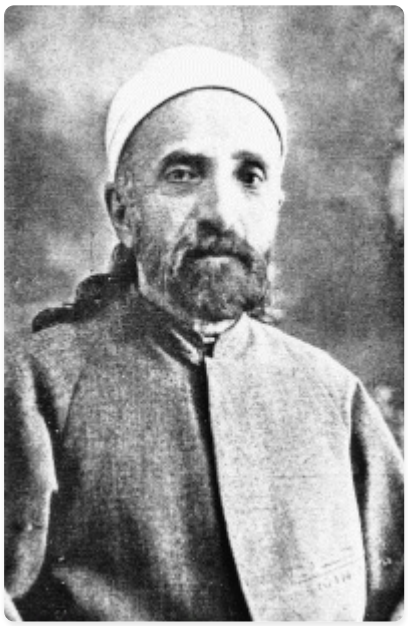
Bahá'ís often compare the role of Covenant-breakers to Judas. But Judas but was one individual, whereas those who they consider Covenant-breakers include every descendant of Bahá'u'lláh and numerous other prominent individuals such as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's personal

secretary and interpreter, the founder of the American Bahá'í community, the Chief of Missionaries, and numerous other prominent individuals.

Shoghi Effendi notes with some degree of triumphalism the death of some of these individuals in *God Passes By*...

> *[Mohammad Ali Bahai's] brother, Mírzá Ḍíya'u'lláh, died prematurely; Mírzá Áqá Ján, his dupe, followed that same brother, three years later, to the grave; and Mírzá Badí'u'lláh, his chief accomplice, betrayed his cause, published a signed denunciation of his evil acts, but rejoined him again, only to be alienated from him in consequence of the scandalous behavior of his own daughter. Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí's half-sister, Furúghíyyih, died of cancer, whilst her husband, Siyyid 'Alí, passed away from a heart attack before his sons could reach him, the eldest being subsequently stricken in the prime of life, by the same malady. Muḥammad-Javád-i-Qazvíní, a notorious Covenant-breaker, perished miserably. Shu'á'u'lláh who, as witnessed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will, had counted on the murder of the Center of the Covenant, and who had been despatched to the United States by his father to join forces with Ibráhím Khayru'lláh, returned crestfallen and empty-handed from his inglorious mission. Jamál-i-Burújirdí, Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí's ablest lieutenant in Persia, fell a prey to a fatal and loathsome disease; Siyyid Mihdíy-i-Dahají, who, betraying 'Abdu'l-Bahá, joined the Covenant-breakers, died in obscurity and poverty, followed by his wife and his two sons; Mírzá Ḥusayn-'Alíy-i-Jahrúmí, Mírzá Ḥusayn-i-Shírázíy-i-Khurṭúmí and Ḥájí Muḥammad-Ḥusayn-i-Káshání, who represented the arch-breaker of the Covenant in Persia, India and Egypt, failed utterly in their missions; whilst the greedy and conceited Ibráhím-i-Khayru'lláh, who had chosen to uphold the banner of his rebellion in America for no less than twenty years, and who had the temerity to denounce, in writing, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, His "false teachings, His misrepresentations of Bahaism, His dissimulation," and to stigmatize His visit to America as "a death-blow" to the "Cause of God," met his death soon after he had uttered these denunciations, utterly abandoned and despised by the entire body of the members of a community, whose founders he himself had converted to the Faith, and in the very land that bore witness to the multiplying evidences of the established ascendancy of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Whose authority he had, in his later years, vowed to uproot.*
>
> *As to those who had openly espoused the cause of this arch-breaker of*

> *Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant [Mohammad Ali Bahai], or who had secretly sympathized with him, whilst outwardly supporting 'Abdu'l-Bahá, some eventually repented and were forgiven; others became disillusioned and lost their faith entirely; a few apostatized, whilst the rest dwindled away, leaving him in the end, except for a handful of his relatives, alone and unsupported. Surviving 'Abdu'l-Bahá by almost twenty years, he who had so audaciously affirmed to His face that he had no assurance he might outlive Him, lived long enough to witness the utter bankruptcy of his cause, leading meanwhile a wretched existence within the walls of a Mansion that had once housed a crowd of his supporters; was denied by the civil authorities, as a result of the crisis he had after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing foolishly precipitated, the official custody of his Father's Tomb; was compelled, a few years later, to vacate that same Mansion, which, through his flagrant neglect, had fallen into a dilapidated condition; was stricken with paralysis which crippled half his body; lay bedridden in pain for months before he died; and was buried according to Muslim rites, in the immediate vicinity of a local Muslim shrine, his grave remaining until the present day devoid of even a tombstone—a pitiful reminder of the hollowness of the claims he had advanced, of the depths of infamy to which he had sunk, and of the severity of the retribution his acts had so richly merited.*



Comments

December 20. On this date in 1849, William Miller died. He predicted that Christ would return to the Earth. William Sears' best-selling book, "Thief in the Night," ties the Bahá'í Faith to the fulfillment of this Christian prophecy. The Bahá'í movie "The Miller Prediction" rests on these events.

Original file: 0482.html (position #60)

December 20. On this date in 1849, William Miller, a Baptist preacher, died. He predicted that on March 21, 1844, Christ would return to the Earth. When this did not come to pass, he recalculated the date to October 22, 1844. William Sears' best-selling book, "Thief in the Night," ties the Bahá'í Faith to the fulfillment of this Christian prophecy. The Bahá'í movie "The Miller Prediction" rests on these events.

William Miller, a Baptist preacher, predicted that on March 21, 1844, Christ would return

to the Earth. When this did not come to pass, he recalculated the date to October 22, 1844. Although the prophecy was not fulfilled, leading to what was called the Great Disappointment, the Millerites would go on to form the various Adventist churches.

Thief in the Night argues that Miller's interpretation of biblical prophecies for the signs and dates of the coming of Jesus were correct and fulfilled by the Báb who declared that he was the "Promised One" on May 23, 1844, and began openly teaching in Iran in October 1844.

Written by Hand of the Cause of God William Sears, a popular radio and television personality, *Thief in the Night* has been reprinted over twenty times by George Ronald Publisher, an official publishing house of the Bahá'ís Administrative Order. The Bahá'í movie "The Miller Prediction" rests on these events.

What is interesting about these events in general is the manner in which individuals react. In the classic work of social psychology, *When Prophecy Fails,* Leon Festinger, Henry Riecken, and Stanley Schachter studied a small UFO religion in Chicago called the Seekers that believed in an imminent apocalypse. They describe the coping mechanisms after the event did not occur, and their findings have been generally applicable to a wide variety of scenarios involving cognitive dissonance and true-believer syndrome.

Festinger describes the basic hypotheses of cognitive dissonance as follows (page 3):

1. The existence of dissonance [or inconsistency], being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance [or consistency].

2. When dissonance is present, in addition to trying to reduce it, the person will actively avoid situations and information which would likely increase the dissonance.

Festinger and his co-authors conclude that the following conditions lead to increased conviction in beliefs following disconfirmation (page 4):

1. The belief must be held with deep conviction and be relevant to the believer's actions or behavior.

2. The belief must have produced actions that are difficult to undo.

3. The belief must be sufficiently specific and concerned with the real world such that it can be clearly disconfirmed.

4. The disconfirmatory evidence must be recognized by the believer.

5. The believer must have social support from other believers.

Festinger describes the increased conviction and proselytizing by cult members after disconfirmation as a specific instantiation of cognitive dissonance (i.e., increased proselyting reduced dissonance by producing the knowledge that others also accepted their beliefs) and its application to understanding complex mass phenomena. (pages 252-259)

When Prophecy Fails was published in 1957, the year that Shoghi Effendi died without having written a will as prescribed in Bahá'u'lláh's Kitáb-i-Aqdas and without having designated a successor Guardian as stipulated in `Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament.

From the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, paragraph 109 "Unto everyone hath been enjoined the writing of a will. The testator should head this document with the adornment of the Most Great Name, bear witness therein unto the oneness of God in the Dayspring of His Revelation, and make mention, as he may wish, of that which is praiseworthy, so that it may be a testimony for him in the kingdoms of Revelation and Creation and a treasure with his Lord, the Supreme Protector, the Faithful."

From The Will And Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Part One, page 12 "O ye beloved of the Lord! It is incumbent upon the Guardian of the Cause of God to appoint in his own life-time him that shall become his successor, that differences may not arise after his passing. He that is appointed must manifest in himself detachment from all worldly things, must be the essence of purity, must show in himself the fear of God, knowledge, wisdom and learning. Thus, should the first-born of the Guardian of the Cause of God not manifest in himself the truth of the words:—“The child is the secret essence of its sire,” that is, should he not inherit of the spiritual within him (the Guardian of the Cause of God) and his glorious lineage not be matched with a goodly character, then must he, (the Guardian of the Cause of God) choose another branch to succeed him."

Comments

December 20. On this date in 1948, "The Palestine Post" carried an article titled "Baha'i Foretold Israel's Future" stating "Shoghy eff. Rabbani, the 'Guardian' of the Bahai Cause, in a letter to Mr. Ben Gurion last week pledged the allegiance of the Bahais in Israel to the Government. Shoghi .."

Original file: 0481.html (position #59)

December 20. On this date in 1948, "The Palestine Post" carried an article titled "Baha'i Foretold Israel's Future" stating "Shoghy eff. Rabbani, the 'Guardian' of the Bahai Cause, in a letter to Mr. Ben Gurion last week pledged the allegiance of the Bahais in Israel to the Government. Shoghi eff. is not just the leader of the 350 Persian-born Bahais of Haifa and Acre, but the World Guardian of the Bahai Faith, which, he declares, has tens of millions of adherents from Alaska to the Argentine, from Norway to South Africa, and from Turkey to Japan."

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum mentions this article in the chapter titled *The Heart and Nerve Centre* in her book *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith*...

> *In January 1949 Mr. Ben Gurion, the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, came to Haifa on his first official visit and the Mayor naturally invited Shoghi Effendi to attend the reception being given in his honour by the Municipality. The dilemma was acute, for if the Guardian did not go, it would, with every reason, be taken as an affront to the new Government, and if he did go he would inevitably be submerged in a sea of people where any pretence at protocol would be swept away (this was indeed the case, as my father, Shoghi Effendi's representative, reported after he returned from this reception). The Guardian therefore decided that as he would not be attending, but was more than willing to show courtesy to the Prime Minister of the new State, he would call upon him in person. With great difficulty this was arranged through the good offices of the Mayor of Haifa, Shabatay Levy, as Mr. Ben Gurion's time in Haifa was very short and it was only two days before the first general election in the new State.*
>
> *The interview took place on Friday evening, January 21st, in the private home the Prime Minister was staying in on Mt. Carmel and lasted about fifteen minutes. Ben Gurion enquired about the Faith and Shoghi Effendi's relation to it and asked if there was a book he could read; Shoghi Effendi answered his questions and assured him he would send him a copy of his own book God Passes By — which he later did, and which was acknowledged with thanks. Typical of the whole history of the Cause and the constant problems that beset it was* ***a long article which appeared in the leading English-language newspaper on December 20, 1948, in which, in the most favourable terms, its teachings were set forth and the station of Shoghi Effendi as its World Head mentioned.*** *On January 28, 1949, there appeared in the letter column of this paper a short and extraordinary statement, signed "Bahai U.N. Observer", which flatly refuted the article and asserted, "Mr. Rabbani is not the Guardian of the Bahai faith, nor its World Leader" and gave the New History Society in New York as a source of further information*
>
> *As there was no such thing as a "Bahai U.N. Observer" this move was plainly inspired by the once-more hopeful band of old Covenant-breakers, who sought, at the outset of a new regime, to blacken Shoghi Effendi's reputation and divert*

attention from his station by referring to Ahmad Sohrab's rootless group in America. At a later date, when in 1952 the Covenant-breakers in Bahji brought their case in the local courts against Shoghi Effendi for the demolition of an old building near the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh, Sohrab sought, unsuccessfully, to bring pressure on the Minister of Religious Affairs to discredit the Bahá'í claims. It was with attacks such as this, both open and covert, that the Guardian, on the threshold of a new phase in the development of the affairs of the Faith at its World Centre, once more had to content.

It had long been the desire of Shoghi Effendi to obtain control of the Mansion at Mazra'ih, where Bahá'u'lláh had first lived when He quitted once-for-all the walls of the prison-city of 'Akka. This property was a Muslim religious endowment and had now fallen vacant. It was planned by the government to turn it into a rest home for officials. All efforts, through the departments concerned, to procure this property were unavailing until Shoghi Effendi appealed directly to Ben Gurion, explaining its significance to the Bahá'ís and his desire to have it visited by pilgrims as a place so closely associated with Bahá'u'lláh. The Prime Minister himself then intervened in the matter and it was leased to the Bahá'ís as an historic site. Shoghi Effendi proudly informed the Bahá'í world, on December 16, 1950, that its keys had been delivered to us, by the Israeli authorities, after the lapse of more than fifty years.

BAHAI FORETOLD
ISRAEL'S RULE

Comments

December 20. On this date in 2008, two of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in São Paulo, Brazil, and one in Kuching, Malaysia.

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Universal House of Justice member Peter Khan would later give a talk on July 3, 2009, later published as "Reflections on the Ridvan 2009 Message," stating,

> *As you are, I am sure, aware, that series of conferences had a galvanizing effect on the Bahá'í Community throughout the world and ultimately on the larger society. It was a tangible demonstration of the global spread of the Faith and it created a most welcome surge toward the goal of 1500 Intensive Programs of Growth by the end of the present plan.*

How does membership in the International Teaching Centre lead to election to the

Universal House of Justice?

How is it that with its nine members elected every five years from the male membership in good standing of the worldwide Bahá'í community by an electoral college consisting of all the members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly throughout the world, the membership of the Universal House of Justice consists exclusively of men who have previously been appointed to the International Teaching Centre by the Universal House of Justice?

With no overt campaigning or politicking permitted, upon what does the electoral college base its election of new members to the Universal House of Justice?

In the Bahá'í electoral system, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. Members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice.

Consider the cases of Stephen Birkland and Stephen Hall. Stephen Birkland was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2008 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010. Stephen Hall was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2005 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010.

In a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

In that period, Stephen Birkland attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 1-2, 2008	Lusaka, Zambia
November 8-9, 2008	Johannesburg, South Africa
November 29-30, 2008	Antofagasta, Chile
December 6-7, 2008	Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
January 17-18, 2009	Vancouver, Canada
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany
February 21-22, 2009	Accra, Ghana

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Birkland"

In that period, Stephen Hall attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 15-16, 2008	Bangui, Central African Republic
November 22-23, 2008	Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo
November 29-30, 2008	Yaoundé, Cameroon
December 6-7, 2008	Portland, Oregon, United States of America
December 13-14, 2008	Stamford, Connecticut, United States of America
January 3-4, 2009	Abidjan, Ivory Coast
January 17-18, 2009	Lae, Papua New Guinea
January 24-25, 2009	Sydney, Australia
January 31-February 1, 2009	Auckland, New Zealand
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Hall"

No other Bahá'ís receive as much exposure to electors of the Universal House of Justice as do members of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the

International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

When the Universal House of Justice appoints members to the International Teaching Centre, they are in fact selecting their own replacements.

In the Bahá'í electoral system, with no overt campaigning and politicking permitted, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. The nine members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice. In fact, every single one of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

To illustrate further, in a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

Each of the 41 Regional Conferences was attended by two Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre with the exception of the Conference held at Uvira, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which had only one representative. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre at the time of the Regional Conferences were Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, Stephen Birkland, Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker.

Of this cohort of Counsellors, the five lady members (Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker) were ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice.

Of the four male members at the time of the 41 Regional Conferences (Juan Francisco

Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, and Stephen Birkland), all have been elected to the Universal House of Justice.

In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. In the people's democracies of the Eastern Bloc, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

The next member elected to the Universal House of Justice will be Andrej Donoval, who is the longest tenured male member of the International Teaching Centre, having been appointed to that body in 2013.

Comments

December 20. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The title 'Hidden Words' was given by Bahá'u'lláh because there is a tradition in Islam, that Fatimih, Muhammad's daughter, grieved greatly over the Martyrdom of her son, and God sent Gabriel to speak encouraging words to her. These words..."

Original file: 0479.html (position #57)

December 20. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The title 'Hidden Words' was given by Bahá'u'lláh because there is a tradition in Islam, that Fatimih, Muhammad's daughter, grieved greatly over the Martyrdom of her son, and God sent Gabriel to speak encouraging words to her. These words were 'hidden', only she having heard them, and in these latter days the Promised One has revealed them, thus fulfilling a tradition."

#1631. The Title 'Hidden Words' was Given by Bahá'u'lláh

"... The title 'Hidden Words' was given by Bahá'u'lláh because there is a tradition in Islam, that Fatimih, Muhammad's daughter, grieved greatly over the Martyrdom of her son, and God sent Gabriel to speak encouraging words to her. These words were 'hidden', only she having heard them, and in these latter days the Promised One) has revealed them, thus fulfilling a tradition."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 20, 1949)

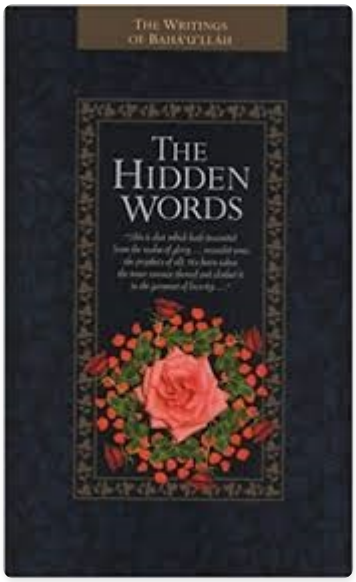
Also here...

1631. The "Hidden Words"--A Collection of Gem-Like Utterances

"...the Hidden Words was originally designated the 'Hidden Book of Fatimih,' and was identified by its Author with the Book of that same name, believed by Shi'ah Islam to be in the possession of the promised Qa'im), and to consist of words of consolation addressed by the angel Gabriel, at God's command, to Fatimih, and dictated to the Imam Ali, for the sole purpose of comforting her in her hour of bitter anguish after the death of her illustrious Father. The significance of this dynamic spiritual leaven cast into the life of the world for the reorientation of the minds of men, the edification of their souls and the rectification of their conduct can best be judged by the description of its character given in the opening passage by its Author: 'This is that which hath descended from the Realm of Glory, uttered by the tongue of power and might, and revealed unto the Prophets of old....'"

(Shoghi Effendi: God Passes By, p. 140)

Please note that in the initial version above, Shoghi Effendi states "Fatimih, Muhammad's daughter, grieved greatly over the Martyrdom of her son," which contradicts the second version which states "for the sole purpose of comforting her in her hour of bitter anguish after the death of her illustrious Father." In fact, Fatimah died soon after her father and did not witness the martyrdom of either of her sons, Hasan or Husayn.



Comments

December 20. On this date in 1928, Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney, a Bahá'í scholar and translator, died. The son of a prominent French Jewish family, he was converted to the Bahá'í Faith around 1900 by May Bolles (later Maxwell), the mother of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, who was resident in France.

Original file: 0478.html (position #56)

December 20. On this date in 1928, Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney, a Bahá'í scholar and translator, died. The son of a prominent French Jewish family), he was converted to the Bahá'í Faith around 1900 by May Ellis Bolles (later Maxwell), the mother of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, who was resident in France.

Comments

December 20. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi mentioned receipt of a postcard from St. Pierre and Miquelon. He was "happy to know that Mrs. Pawlowska is continuing her valuable pioneer service there, to which he attaches great importance." She was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for those islands

Original file: 0477.html (position #55)

December 20. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi mentioned receipt of a postcard from St. Pierre and Miquelon. He was "happy to know that Mrs. Pawlowska is continuing her valuable pioneer service there, to which he attaches great importance." She was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for those islands.

20 December 1956

To individual believers

Dear Bahá'í Friends:

The beloved Guardian was pleased to see the work is going well in the new territories, and particularly to see the post mark "Saint Pierre & Miquelon" on your post card of October 22nd.

*He is happy to know that Mrs. Pawlowska **[71]** is continuing her valuable pioneer service there, to which he attaches great importance.*

He assures you both of his loving prayers for the success of your devoted labours.

With warm Bahá'í greetings,

R. Rabbani

May the Beloved, Whose Cause you promote with such splendid devotion, constancy and vigilance, reward you for your past achievements, and enable you to enrich the record of your meritorious services to His Faith,

Your true brother,

Shoghi

***[71]** Ola Pawlowska -- Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for St. Pierre and Miquelon Islands (1953-58), later pioneered to Luxembourg, Poland and Congo (Zaire)*

Ola Pawłowska

Comments

December 21. On this date in 1927, Frank Leonard Wyss, an Australian Baha'i who served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia in the 1950's and became the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Cocos Islands, was born in Sydney, Australia.

Original file: 0476.html (position #54)

December 21. On this date in 1927, Frank Leonard Wyss, an Australian Baha'i who served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia in the 1950's and became the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Cocos Islands_Islands), was born in Sydney, Australia.

What has always struck me about the designation of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh is the arbitrariness with which the "virgin territories" were defined. For example, the Cook Islands and Tonga Island, both part of the Realm of New Zealand have distinct sets of Knights, while Niue and the Chatham Islands, also part of the Realm of New Zealand, are Knightless.

Several islands off the coast of Alaska have distinct Knights, like Baranof Island , Kodiak Island, and the Aleutian Islands. Yet other Alaskan islands, like the Pribilof Islands are Knightless.

The Brazilian state of Amapá has its own Knights (for Portuguese Guiana), while the other Brazilian states are Knightless.

Crete and Rhodes have Knights distinct from the Knights of mainland Greece, yet other Greek islands, like Santorini and Samos, are Knightless.

Key West has its own Knight, yet the other Florida Keys are Knightless.

Tiny islands, like Grand Manan, have their own Knights. St. Thomas Island has its own Knight, yet the remaining Leeward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands. Similarly, the Windward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands.

Comments

Baha'i History December 21. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote about "The transfer of the sacred remains of the brother and mother of our Lord and Master 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Mount Carmel." The letter also mentions 'Abdu'l-Bahá's brother Mirza Badí'ullah and Badí'ullah's daughter Sadhij Nassar.

Original file: 0475.html (position #53)

December 21. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote about "The transfer of the sacred remains of the brother and mother of our Lord and Master 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Mount Carmel." The letter also mentions 'Abdu'l-Bahá's brother Mirza Badí'ullah and Badí'ullah's daughter Sadhij Nassar.

> *THE SPIRITUAL POTENCIES OF THAT CONSECRATED SPOT*

The transfer of the sacred remains of the brother and mother of our Lord and Master 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Mount Carmel and their final interment within the hallowed precincts of the Shrine of the Báb, and in the immediate neighborhood of the resting place of the Greatest Holy Leaf, constitute, apart from their historic associations and the tender sentiments they arouse, events of such capital institutional significance as only future happenings, steadily and mysteriously unfolding at the world center of our Faith, can adequately demonstrate.

The circumstances attending the consummation of this long, this profoundly cherished hope were no less significant. The swiftness and suddenness with which so delicate and weighty an undertaking was conducted; the surmounting of various obstacles which the outbreak of war and its inevitable repercussions necessarily engendered; the success of the long-drawn out negotiations which the solution of certain preliminary problems imposed; the execution of the plan in the face of the continued instability and persistent dangers following the fierce riots that so long and so violently rocked the Holy Land, and despite the smoldering fire of animosity kindled in the breasts of ecclesiastics and Covenant-breakers alike--all combined to demonstrate, afresh and with compelling power, the invincible might of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

The Purest Branch, the martyred son, the companion, and amanuensis of Bahá'u'lláh, that pious and holy youth, who in the darkest days of Bahá'u'lláh's incarceration in the barracks of 'Akká entreated, on his death-bed, his Father to accept him as a ransom for those of His loved ones who yearned for, but were unable to attain, His presence, and the saintly mother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, surnamed Navvab by Bahá'u'lláh, and the first recipient of the honored and familiar title of "the Most Exalted Leaf," separated in death above half a century, and forced to suffer the humiliation of an alien burial-ground, are now at long last reunited with the Greatest Holy Leaf with whom they had so abundantly shared the tribulations of one of the most distressing episodes of the Heroic Age of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Avenged, eternally safeguarded, befittingly glorified, they repose embosomed in the heart of Carmel, hidden beneath its sacred soil, interred in one single spot, lying beneath the shadow of the twin holy Tombs, and facing across the bay, on an eminence of unequalled loveliness and beauty, the silver-city of 'Akká, the Point of Adoration of the entire Bahá'í world, and the Door of Hope for all mankind. "Haste thee, O Carmel!" thus proclaims the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh, "for lo, the light of the countenance of God, the Ruler of the Kingdom of Names and Fashioner of the heavens, hath been lifted upon thee." "Rejoice, for God hath in this Day established

upon thee His throne, hath made thee the dawning-place of His signs and the day-spring of the evidences of His Revelation."

The machinations of **Badí'ullah***--the brother and lieutenant of the Focal Center of sedition and Arch-Breaker of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, the deceased* **Muhammad-'Ali***--who with uncommon temerity and exceptional vigor addressed his written protest to the civil authorities, claiming the right to oppose the projected transfer of the remains of the mother and brother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, have been utterly frustrated. So foolish a claim, advanced by one who in the* **Will and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahá** *has been denounced as an "alert and active worker of mischief," and whose life has been marked by so many instances of extravagance, of betrayal and folly, has been summarily rejected by the fairness and justice of the civil authorities, in whose custody the notorious* **Sadhíj [1]***, the daughter of that same* **Badí'ullah***, is still retained, as a direct result of her ceaseless instigations to rebellion and terrorism, and whose acts constitute a clear and double violation of the civil law of the land and of the spiritual ordinances of Bahá'u'lláh, in Whose Faith she professes to believe.*

Unabashed by his appalling mistakes and blunders; undeterred by the galling failure of his persistent efforts, in conjunction with his brother, to establish, in the days following the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, their alleged right to the custody of the **Most Holy Tomb***; unrestrained by the memory of the abortive attempt of* **Muhammad-'Ali** *to retain the* **Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh** *as a private residence for himself and his family; unchastened by the spiritual and material misery into which he and his kindred have sunk; and impotent to perceive the contrast between that misery and the consolidating strength and ever-enhancing prestige of the institutions heralding the birth of the* **World Order of Bahá'u'lláh** *at its international center, he has, with characteristic insolence, dared to raise once again his voice against the resistless march of events that are steadily accelerating the expansion and establishment of the Faith in the Holy Land.*

For it must be clearly understood, nor can it be sufficiently emphasized, that the conjunction of the resting-place of the **Greatest Holy Leaf** *with those of her* **brother** *and* **mother** *incalculably reinforces the spiritual potencies of that consecrated Spot which, under the wings of* **the Báb's overshadowing Sepulchre***, and in the vicinity of the* **future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár***, which will be reared on its flank, is destined to evolve into the focal center of those world-shaking, world-embracing, world-directing administrative institutions, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh*

and anticipated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and which are to function in consonance with the principles that govern the twin institutions of the Guardianship&oldid=745828715) *and the* Universal House of Justice*. Then, and then only, will this momentous prophecy which illuminates the concluding passages of the Tablet of Carmel be fulfilled: "Ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee (Carmel), and will manifest the people of Bahá who have been mentioned in the Book of Names."*

To attempt to visualize, even in its barest outline, the glory that must envelop these institutions, to essay even a tentative and partial description of their character or the manner of their operation, or to trace however inadequately the course of events leading to their rise and eventual establishment is far beyond my own capacity and power. Suffice it to say that at this troubled stage in world history the association of these three incomparably precious souls who, next to the three Central Figures of our Faith, tower in rank above the vast multitude of the heroes, Letters, martyrs, hands, teachers and administrators of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, in such a potentially powerful spiritual and administrative Center, is in itself an event which will release forces that are bound to hasten the emergence in a land which, geographically, spiritually and administratively, constitutes the heart of the entire planet, of some of the brightest gems of that World Order *now shaping in the womb of this travailing age.*

For such as might undertake, in the days to come, the meritorious and highly enviable pilgrimage *to these blessed shrines, as well as for the benefit of the less privileged who, aware of the greatness of their virtue and the pre-eminence of their lineage, desire to commune with their spirits, and to strive to acquire an added insight into the glory of their position, and to follow in their footsteps, let these testimonies written by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá be their inspiration and guidance in their noble quest:*

"At this very moment," Bahá'u'lláh testifies, "My son *is being washed before My face, after Our having sacrificed him in the Most Great Prison. Thereat have the dwellers of the Abhá Tabernacle wept with a great weeping, and such as have suffered imprisonment with this Youth in the path of God, the Lord of the promised Day, lamented. Under such conditions My Pen hath not been prevented from remembering its Lord, the Lord of all nations. It summoneth the people unto God, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful. This is the day whereon he that was created by the light of Bahá has suffered martyrdom, at a time when he lay imprisoned at the hands of his enemies."*

"Upon thee, O Branch of God!" He solemnly and most touchingly, in that same Tablet, bestows upon him His benediction, "be the remembrance of God and His praise, and the praise of all that dwell in the Realm of Immortality, and of all the denizens of the Kingdom of Names. Happy art thou in that thou hast been faithful to the Covenant of God and His Testament, until Thou didst sacrifice thyself before the face of thy Lord, the Almighty, the Unconstrained. Thou, in truth, hast been wronged, and to this testifieth the Beauty of Him, the Self-Subsisting. Thou didst, in the first days of thy life, bear that which hath caused all things to groan, and made every pillar to tremble. Happy is the one that remembereth thee, and draweth nigh, through thee, unto God, the Creator of the Morn."

"Glorified art Thou, O Lord, my God!" He, in a prayer, astoundingly proclaims, "Thou seest me in the hands of Mine enemies, and My son bloodstained before Thy face, O Thou in Whose hands is the kingdom of all names. I have, O my Lord, offered up that which Thou hast given Me, that Thy servants may be quickened and all that dwell on earth be united."

"Blessed art thou," He, in another Tablet affirms, "and blessed he that turneth unto thee, and visiteth thy grave, and draweth nigh, through thee, unto God, the Lord of all that was and shall be.... I testify that thou didst return in meekness unto thine abode. Great is thy blessedness and the blessedness of them that hold fast unto the hem of thy outspread robe.... Thou art, verily, the trust of God and His treasure in this land. Erelong will God reveal through thee that which He hath desired. He, verily, is the Truth, the Knower of things unseen. When thou wast laid to rest in the earth, the earth itself trembled in its longing to meet thee. Thus hath it been decreed, and yet the people perceive not.... Were We to recount the mysteries of thine ascension, they that are asleep would waken, and all beings would be set ablaze with the fire of the remembrance of My Name, the Mighty, the Loving."

Concerning the Most Exalted Leaf, the mother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'u'lláh has written: "The first Spirit through which all spirits were revealed, and the first Light by which all lights shone forth, rest upon thee, O Most Exalted Leaf, thou who hast been mentioned in the Crimson Book! Thou art the one whom God created to arise and serve His own Self, and the Manifestation of His Cause, and the Day-Spring of His Revelation, and the Dawning-Place of His signs, and the Source of His commandments; and Who so aided thee that thou didst turn with thy whole being unto Him, at a time when His servants and handmaidens had turned away from His Face. ...Happy art thou, O My handmaiden, and My Leaf,

and the one mentioned in My Book, and inscribed by My Pen of Glory in My Scrolls and Tablets. ...Rejoice thou, at this moment, in the most exalted Station and the All-highest Paradise, and the Abhá Horizon, inasmuch as He Who is the Lord of Names hath remembered thee. We bear witness that thou didst attain unto all good, and that God hath so exalted thee, that all honor and glory circled around thee."

"O Navvab!" He thus, in another Tablet, addresses her, "O Leaf that hath sprung from My Tree, and been My companion! My glory be upon thee, and My loving-kindness, and My mercy that hath surpassed all beings. We announce unto thee that which will gladden thine eye, and assure thy soul, and rejoice thine heart. Verily, thy Lord is the Compassionate, the All-Bountiful. God hath been and will be pleased with thee, and hath singled thee out for His own Self, and chosen thee from among His handmaidens to serve Him, and hath made thee the companion of His Person in the day-time and in the night-season."

"Hear thou Me once again," He reassures her, "God is well-pleased with thee, as a token of His grace and a sign of His mercy. He hath made thee to be His companion in every one of His worlds, and hath nourished thee with His meeting and presence, so long as His Name, and His Remembrance, and His Kingdom, and His Empire shall endure. Happy is the handmaid that hath mentioned thee, and sought thy good-pleasure, and humbled herself before thee, and held fast unto the cord of thy love. Woe betide him that denieth thy exalted station, and the things ordained for thee from God, the Lord of all names, and him that hath turned away from thee, and rejected thy station before God, the Lord of the mighty throne."

"O faithful ones!" Bahá'u'lláh specifically enjoins, "Should ye visit the resting-place of the Most Exalted Leaf, who hath ascended unto the Glorious Companion, stand ye and say: 'Salutation and blessing and glory upon thee, O Holy Leaf that hath sprung from the Divine Lote-Tree! I bear witness that thou hast believed in God and in His signs, and answered His Call, and turned unto Him, and held fast unto His cord, and clung to the hem of His grace, and fled thy home in His path, and chosen to live as a stranger, out of love for His presence and in thy longing to serve Him. May God have mercy upon him that draweth nigh unto thee, and remembereth thee through the things which My Pen hath voiced in this, the most great station. We pray God that He may forgive us, and forgive them that have turned unto thee, and grant their desires, and bestow upon them, through His wondrous grace, whatever be their wish. He, verily, is the Bountiful, the Generous.

> *Praise be to God, He Who is the Desire of all worlds; and the Beloved of all who recognize Him."*
>
> *And, finally, 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself in one of His remarkably significant Tablets, has borne witness not only to the exalted station of one whose "seed shall inherit the Gentiles," whose Husband is the Lord of Hosts, but also to the sufferings endured by her who was His beloved mother. "As to thy question concerning the 54th chapter of Isaiah," He writes, "This chapter refers to the Most Exalted Leaf, the mother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. As a proof of this it is said: `For more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife.' Reflect upon this statement, and then upon the following: 'And thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.' And truly the humiliation and reproach which she suffered in the path of God is a fact which no one can refute. For the calamities and afflictions mentioned in the whole chapter are such afflictions which she suffered in the path of God, all of which she endured with patience and thanked God therefor and praised Him, because He had enabled her to endure afflictions for the sake of Bahá. During all this time, the men and women (Covenant-breakers) persecuted her in an incomparable manner, while she was patient, God-fearing, calm, humble and contented through the favor of her Lord and by the bounty of her Creator."*
>
> *December 21, 1939*

[1] From the entry titled "Sadhij Nassar" on "Palestinian Journeys"...

Sadhij Nassar was born in Haifa. Her father, an Iranian by origin, was Shaykh Badi'ullah Baha'i from Acre. She and her husband, Najib Nassar, had a son, Faruq. She studied at the Sisters of Nazareth School in Haifa and graduated from it.

Her professional life began in 1923 when she started writing articles in the *al-Karmel* newspaper founded in Haifa in 1908 by her husband Najib Nassar. She later helped him edit and run that newspaper.

In 1926 she began a section in that newspaper called "The Women's Section," which dealt with social issues; both men and women wrote articles for that section. In 1932, she ran two sections in that newspaper, one devoted to women's issues and the other to social topics.

Sadhij Nassar's articles about women were distinguished by their libertarian spirit. She encouraged Palestinian mothers to raise their children on the basis of equality between

boys and girls, called for educating the Palestinian woman and providing her with work opportunities, and attacked dominant social ills in society. She also encouraged Palestinian women to engage in political life and to contribute to resisting British and Zionist colonialism.

In addition to her journalistic work, Nassar played a role in mobilizing and organizing Palestinian women. In 1930, and in collaboration with Mariam al-Khalil, she co-founded the Society of the Arab Women's Union in Haifa, which played a prominent role in the General Strike of 1936. She also took part in the women's demonstrations that accompanied that strike. Nassar was among the first to recognize the importance of organizing rural women and in getting them to join the national struggle. She worked hard to organize the women farmers of the Baysan district (among whom she lived for some time). Her efforts in this regard, however, proved unsuccessful.

Sadhij Nassar participated in several Arab women's conferences and was a member of the Palestinian women's delegation to the Eastern Women's Congress for Palestine held in Cairo in the middle of October 1938, at the invitation of Huda Sha'rawi, the pioneer Arab feminist. At that conference, Nassar was elected secretary of the conference bureau. The conference called for an end to the British Mandate and the formation of a constitutional and sovereign state in Palestine, linked by treaty to Britain (as were Egypt and Iraq). She also took part in the General Congress of Arab Women called for by the Union of Egyptian Women and held at the Cairo Opera House in 1944. She delivered a speech at that conference urging the Arabs to work actively to save Palestine before it was too late.

Sadhij Nassar was the first Palestinian woman to be arrested by the British Mandate authorities because of her nationalist activities. The British arrested her in late 1938 and charged her with supplying arms to the Palestinian rebels, describing her as a "very dangerous woman" and a "prominent agitator." She was held at the Bethlehem detention camp for eleven months. A wide local and international campaign was mounted to demand her release; her husband wrote her a letter in which he stated that if he did not make it into the pages of history because of his newspaper *al-Karmel,* he would surely make it because of her.

Nassar continued her editorial and administrative work in al-Karmel. The British Mandate authorities closed the newspaper several times, but in 1944 they invoked the emergency regulations then prevalent in Palestine and sealed its premises permanently.

Following the Palestine disaster of 1948, Sadhij Nassar sought refuge in Lebanon, where she published a series of articles in the newspaper *al-Yawm* about the tragedy of Palestine

and the deterioration of conditions in it. After moving to Syria, she published her articles in Syrian newspapers such as *al-Qabas*.

Sadhij Nassar was a dedicated and firm nationalist and a prominent and unwavering feminist activist. She was among the first Palestinian women who were active in the field of politics and nationalist organization as well as journalism. She was highly cultured and was proficient in four languages.

She died in Damascus and was buried there.

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Comments

December 21. On this date in 1913, Frederick Laws, an American Bahá'í who became the Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for Basutoland, was born in Pineridge, Alabama.

Original file: 0474.html (position #52)

December 21. On this date in 1913, Frederick Laws, an American Bahá'í who became the Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for Basutoland, was born in Pineridge, Alabama.

What has always struck me about the designation of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh is the arbitrariness with which the "virgin territories" were defined. For example, the Cook Islands and Tonga Island, both part of the Realm of New Zealand have distinct sets of Knights, while Niue and the Chatham Islands, also part of the Realm of New Zealand, are Knightless.

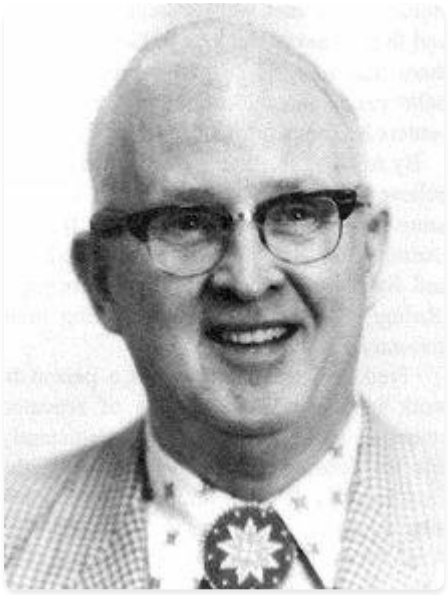
Several islands off the coast of Alaska have distinct Knights, like Baranof Island , Kodiak Island, and the Aleutian Islands. Yet other Alaskan islands, like the Pribilof Islands are Knightless.

The Brazilian state of Amapá has its own Knights (for Portuguese Guiana), while the other Brazilian states are Knightless.

Crete and Rhodes have Knights distinct from the Knights of mainland Greece, yet other Greek islands, like Santorini and Samos, are Knightless.

Key West has its own Knight, yet the other Florida Keys are Knightless.

Tiny islands, like Grand Manan, have their own Knights. St. Thomas Island has its own Knight, yet the remaining Leeward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands. Similarly, the Windward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands.



Comments

December 21. On this date in 1972, the UHJ referenced Shoghi Effendi as having said "Under no circumstances should Bahá'ís drink. It is so unambiguously forbidden in the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh that there is no excuse for them even touching it in the form of a toast, or in a burning plum pudding..."

Original file: 0473.html (position #51)

December 21. On this date in 1972, the UHJ referenced Shoghi Effendi as having said "Under no circumstances should Bahá'ís drink. It is so unambiguously forbidden in the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh that there is no excuse for them even touching it in the form of a toast, or in a burning plum pudding; in fact, in any way."

> *1173. Drinking Forbidden, No Excuse to Touch It Even in Plum Pudding*

> *"Under no circumstances should Bahá'ís drink. It is so unambiguously forbidden in the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh that there is no excuse for them even touching it in the form of a toast, or in a burning plum pudding; in fact, in any way."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, March 3, 1957: Cited in a letter from the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador, December 21, 1972)*

Comments

December 21. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "The original population of the United States was very dear to Abdu'l-Bahá's heart, and He foretold for the Indians a great future if they accepted and became enlightened by the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh."

Original file: 0472.html (position #50)

December 21. On this date in 1947, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer stated that "The original population of the United States was very dear to Abdu'l-Bahá's heart, and He foretold for the Indians a great future if they accepted and became enlightened by the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh."

> *1802. Abdu'l-Bahá Foretold for the Indians of America a Great Future if They Accepted the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh*
>
> *"The original population of the United States was very dear to Abdu'l-Bahá's*

> *heart, and He foretold for the Indians a great future if they accepted and became enlightened by the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.*
>
> *"To believe in the Mouthpiece of God in His Day confers very great blessings, not only on individuals, but on races, and He hopes that you who are now numbered amongst the followers of Bahá'u'lláh will give His Message to many more of your tribe, and in this way hasten for your people a bright and happy future."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 21, 1947)*

On September 2, 1912, during his tour of North America, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk in the Montreal home of William Sutherland Maxwell, (later named a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi in 1951) and May Maxwell, the parents of Mary Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, wife of Shoghi Effendi. 'Abdu'l-Bahá presented his views on native cultures, Africans, indigenous North Americans and pre-Columbian America.

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum described the importance of this Shrine with the following words:

> *Things arise in historic perspective as time goes by. This is the only private home in Canada where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed. After His visit, it was always considered blessed by having been used by Him. For future generations, it will eventually grow in importance and sacredness, because He, the Centre of the Covenant, the Greatest Mystery of God, stayed here.*

It was at this home that 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave his talk discussing his views on native cultures, Africans, indigenous North Americans and pre-Columbian America:

> *Nature is the material world. When we look upon it, we see that it is dark and imperfect. For instance, if we allow a piece of land to remain in its natural condition, we will find it covered with thorns and thistles; useless weeds and wild vegetation will flourish upon it, and it will become like a jungle. The trees will be fruitless, lacking beauty and symmetry; wild animals, noxious insects and reptiles will abound in its dark recesses. This is the incompleteness and imperfection of the*

world of nature. To change these conditions, we must clear the ground and cultivate it so that flowers may grow instead of thorns and weeds—that is to say, we must illumine the dark world of nature. In their primal natural state, the forests are dim, gloomy, impenetrable. Man opens them to the light, clears away the tangled underbrush and plants fruitful trees. Soon the wild woodlands and jungle are changed into productive orchards and beautiful gardens; order has replaced chaos; the dark realm of nature has become illumined and brightened by cultivation.

If man himself is left in his natural state, he will become lower than the animal and continue to grow more ignorant and imperfect. ***The savage tribes of central Africa are evidences of this. Left in their natural condition, they have sunk to the lowest depths and degrees of barbarism, dimly groping in a world of mental and moral obscurity. If we wish to illumine this dark plane of human existence, we must bring man forth from the hopeless captivity of nature, educate him and show him the pathway of light and knowledge, until, uplifted from his condition of ignorance, he becomes wise and knowing; no longer savage and revengeful, he becomes civilized and kind; once evil and sinister, he is endowed with the attributes of heaven. But left in his natural condition without education and training, it is certain that he will become more depraved and vicious than the animal, even to the extreme degree witnessed among African tribes who practice cannibalism. It is evident, therefore, that the world of nature is incomplete, imperfect until awakened and illumined by the light and stimulus of education.***

In these days there are new schools of philosophy blindly claiming that the world of nature is perfect. If this is true, why are children trained and educated in schools, and what is the need of extended courses in sciences, arts and letters in colleges and universities? What would be the result if humanity were left in its natural condition without education or training? All scientific discoveries and attainments are the outcomes of knowledge and education. The telegraph, phonograph, telephone were latent and potential in the world of nature but would never have come forth into the realm of visibility unless man through education had penetrated and discovered the laws which control them. All the marvelous developments and miracles of what we call civilization would have remained hidden, unknown and, so to speak, nonexistent, if man had remained in his natural condition, deprived of the bounties, blessings and benefits of education and mental

culture. The intrinsic difference between the ignorant man and the astute philosopher is that the former has not been lifted out of his natural condition, while the latter has undergone systematic training and education in schools and colleges until his mind has awakened and unfolded to higher realms of thought and perception; otherwise, both are human and natural.

God has sent forth the Prophets for the purpose of quickening the soul of man into higher and divine recognitions. He has revealed the heavenly Books for this great purpose. For this the breaths of the Holy Spirit have been wafted through the gardens of human hearts, the doors of the divine Kingdom opened to mankind and the invisible inspirations sent forth from on high. This divine and ideal power has been bestowed upon man in order that he may purify himself from the imperfections of nature and uplift his soul to the realm of might and power. God has purposed that the darkness of the world of nature shall be dispelled and the imperfect attributes of the natal self be effaced in the effulgent reflection of the Sun of Truth. The mission of the Prophets of God has been to train the souls of humanity and free them from the thralldom of natural instincts and physical tendencies. They are like unto Gardeners, and the world of humanity is the field of Their cultivation, the wilderness and untrained jungle growth wherein They proceed to labor. They cause the crooked branches to become straightened, the fruitless trees to become fruitful, and gradually transform this great wild, uncultivated field into a beautiful orchard producing wonderful abundance and outcome.

If the world of nature were perfect and complete in itself, there would be no need of such training and cultivation in the human world—no need of teachers, schools and universities, arts and crafts. The revelations of the Prophets of God would not have been necessary, and the heavenly Books would have been superfluous. If the world of nature were perfect and sufficient for mankind, we would have no need of God and our belief in Him. Therefore, the bestowal of all these great helps and accessories to the attainment of divine life is because the world of nature is incomplete and imperfect. ***Consider this Canadian country during the early history of Montreal when the land was in its wild, uncultivated and natural condition. The soil was unproductive, rocky and almost uninhabitable—vast forests stretching in every direction. What invisible power caused this great metropolis to spring up amid such savage and forbidding conditions? It was the human mind. Therefore, nature and the effect of nature's laws were imperfect. The mind of man***

remedied and removed this imperfect condition, until now we behold a great city instead of a savage unbroken wilderness. Before the coming of Columbus America itself was a wild, uncultivated expanse of primeval forest, mountains and rivers—a very world of nature. Now it has become the world of man. It was dark, forbidding and savage; now it has become illumined with a great civilization and prosperity. Instead of forests, we behold productive farms, beautiful gardens and prolific orchards. Instead of thorns and useless vegetation, we find flowers, domestic animals and fields awaiting harvest. If the world of nature were perfect, the condition of this great country would have been left unchanged.

If a child is left in its natural state and deprived of education, there is no doubt that it will grow up in ignorance and illiteracy, its mental faculties dulled and dimmed; in fact, it will become like an animal. This is evident among the savages of central Africa, who are scarcely higher than the beast in mental development.

The conclusion is irresistible that the splendors of the Sun of Truth, the Word of God, have been the source and cause of human upbuilding and civilization. The world of nature is the kingdom of the animal. In its natural condition and plane of limitation the animal is perfect. The ferocious beasts of prey have been completely subject to the laws of nature in their development. They are without education or training; they have no power of abstract reasoning and intellectual ideals; they have no touch with the spiritual world and are without conception of God or the Holy Spirit. The animal can neither recognize nor apprehend the spiritual power of man and makes no distinction between man and itself, for the reason that its susceptibilities are limited to the plane of the senses. It lives under the bondage of nature and nature's laws. All the animals are materialists. They are deniers of God and without realization of a transcendent power in the universe. They have no knowledge of the divine Prophets and Holy Books—mere captives of nature and the sense world. In reality they are like the great philosophers of this day who are not in touch with God and the Holy Spirit—deniers of the Prophets, ignorant of spiritual susceptibilities, deprived of the heavenly bounties and without belief in the supernatural power. The animal lives this kind of life blissfully and untroubled, whereas the material philosophers labor and study for ten or twenty years in schools and colleges, denying God, the Holy Spirit and divine inspirations. The animal is even a greater philosopher, for it attains the ability to do this without

labor and study. For instance, the cow denies God and the Holy Spirit, knows nothing of divine inspirations, heavenly bounties or spiritual emotions and is a stranger to the world of hearts. Like the philosophers, the cow is a captive of nature and knows nothing beyond the range of the senses. The philosophers, however, glory in this, saying, "We are not captives of superstitions; we have implicit faith in the impressions of the senses and know nothing beyond the realm of nature, which contains and covers everything." But the cow, without study or proficiency in the sciences, modestly and quietly views life from the same standpoint, living in harmony with nature's laws in the utmost dignity and nobility.

This is not the glory of man. The glory of man is in the knowledge of God, spiritual susceptibilities, attainment to transcendent powers and the bounties of the Holy Spirit. The glory of man is in being informed of the teachings of God. This is the glory of humanity. Ignorance is not glory but darkness. Can these souls who are steeped in the lower strata of ignorance become informed of the mysteries of God and the realities of existence while Jesus Christ was without knowledge of them? Is the intellect of these people greater than the intellect of Christ? Christ was heavenly, divine and belonged to the world of the Kingdom. He was the embodiment of spiritual knowledge. His intellect was superior to these philosophers, His comprehension deeper, His perception keener, His knowledge more perfect. How is it that He overlooked and denied Himself everything in this world? He attached little importance to this material life, denying Himself rest and composure, accepting trials and voluntarily suffering vicissitudes because He was endowed with spiritual susceptibilities and the power of the Holy Spirit. He beheld the splendors of the divine Kingdom, embodied the bounties of God and possessed ideal powers. He was illumined with love and mercy, and so, likewise, were all the Prophets of God.

Comments

December 21. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The cardinal principle...obedience to the Government prevailing in any land in which we reside. We cannot, because, say, we do not personally like a totalitarian form of government, refuse to obey it when it becomes the ruling power."

Original file: 0471.html (position #49)

December 21. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The cardinal principle which we must follow, (in connection with your questions), is obedience to the Government prevailing in any land in which we reside. We cannot, because, say, we do not personally like a totalitarian form of government, refuse to obey it when it becomes the ruling power."

> *1453. Shun Politics Like the Plague and be Obedient to the Government in Power*

"The cardinal principle which we must follow, (in connection with your questions), is obedience to the Government prevailing in any land in which we reside. We cannot, because, say, we do not personally like a totalitarian form of government, refuse to obey it when it becomes the ruling power. Nor can we join underground Movements which are a minority agitating against the prevailing government.

"If a state of Revolution and complete chaos exists in a Country, so that it is impossible to say there is one government in power, then the friends must consult with their National or their Local Assembly, and be guided by what the Assembly considers the proper action to take; in other words which party might be best considered the legal governing authority.

"We see, therefore, that we must do two things--shun politics like the plague, and be obedient to the Government in power in the place where we reside. We cannot start judging how a particular government came into power, and therefore whether we should obey it or not. This would immediately plunge us into politics. We must obey in all cases except where a spiritual principle is involved, such as denying our Faith. For these spiritual principles we must be willing to die. What we Bahá'ís must face is the fact that society is rapidly disintegrating--so rapidly that moral issues which were clear half a century ago are now hopelessly confused, and what is more, thoroughly mixed up with battling political interests. That is why the Bahá'ís must turn all their forces into the channel of building up the Bahá'í Cause and its administration. They can neither change nor help the world in any other way at present. If they become involved in the issues the Governments of the world are struggling over, they will be lost. But if they build up the Bahá'í pattern they can offer it as a remedy when all else has failed."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 21, 1948)

Comments

December 21. On this date in 1928, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West" regarding "the death of our talented and dearly-beloved friend, Mr. Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney."

Original file: 0470.html (position #48)

December 21. On this date in 1928, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West" regarding "the death of our talented and dearly-beloved friend, Mr. Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney."

> *Letter 47 To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West. Dearly-beloved brothers and sisters in 'Abdu'l-Bahá!*
>
> *With feelings of profound sorrow I am moved to address you these few lines mourning the loss which the Cause has undoubtedly sustained by the passing of one who, for many years and in circumstances of exceptional significance, rendered the sacred Threshold distinctive and inestimable services. The hand of Divine Decree has removed, by the death of our talented and dearly-beloved friend, Mr. Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney, yet another outstanding figure in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, who, by his brilliant gifts of mind and heart as well as by the divers*

achievements of his life, has truly enriched the annals of God's immortal Faith.

Mr. Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney

A pioneer of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh ever since its celestial light first warmed and illuminated the West, he has, by his close association with the person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, by his contact with all sections of society, by his scholarly presentation of the history and fundamentals of the Faith, and lastly by his unforgettable share in the settlement of the complex and pressing issues that called for expert assistance in the days following 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, achieved a standing which few have as yet attained.

The days of his spiritual communion with 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His household within the walls of the prison-city of 'Akká, wherein he imbibed the principles which he later so ably expounded to the peoples of the West; his pre-eminent role on his return to Paris in kindling the torch which is destined to shed eternal illumination upon his native land and its people; the links of abiding fellowship which he forged with our Persian brethren in the course of the historic mission entrusted to his charge by our Beloved; the seeds which he scattered far and wide during his subsequent travels to the heart of Asia, throughout India, beyond the remotest villages of Burma and as far as the eastern confines of Indo-China; the able support he lent in its initial and intermediary stages to the case of Bahá'u'lláh's house in Baghdád; his unhesitating intervention with State officials in paving the way for the ultimate emancipation of our Egyptian brethren from the yoke of orthodox Islam; the stimulating encouragement his visit caused to the Bahá'í community of Tunis on the northern shores of Africa; and last but not least the ability and diligence with which he applied himself to the solution of the delicate and vexing problems of the Holy Land in the critical years following 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension--all stand out as memorable landmarks in a life that was as varied in its international aspects as it was rich in its spiritual experience.

His gifts of unfailing sympathy and penetrating insight, his wide knowledge and mature experience, all of which he utilized for the glory and propagation of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, will be gratefully remembered by future generations who, as the days go by, will better estimate the abiding value of the responsibilities he shouldered for the introduction and consolidation of the Bahá'í Faith in the Western world.

Suffering as he did in his last days from the effects of a slow and painful illness, he

bore heroically his share of the afflictions of the world, and is now in the realms of blissful deliverance partaking his full share of the goodly reward which he certainly deserved. To me, and particularly amid the storm and stress that have agitated my life after `Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, he was a sustaining and comforting companion, a most valued counsellor, an intimate and trusted friend.

With much emotion and the deepest sense of gratitude I supplicate at the holy Threshold--and request you to join with me in my prayers--for the spiritual advancement in the realms above of a soul who by the sheer merit of the signal services he rendered already deserves to rank highly among the departed faithful.

May he forever rest in peace.

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,

December 21, 1928.

Comments

December 21. On this date in 1898, Dorothy Beecher Baker, later a Hand of the Cause of God, was born in Newark, New Jersey. An enthusiastic Bahá'í teacher, in 1954 she died in a plane crash while traveling to teach the Faith.

Original file: 0469.html (position #47)

December 21. On this date in 1898, Dorothy Beecher Baker, later a Hand of the Cause of God, was born in Newark, New Jersey. An enthusiastic Bahá'í teacher, in1954 she died in a plane crash while traveling to teach the Faith.

Comments

December 21. On this date in 2006, the UHJ addressed a letter "to the Bahá'ís of Egypt" concerning their ability "to obtain officially issued identification cards."

Original file: 0468.html (position #46)

December 21. On this date in 2006, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter "to the Bahá'ís of Egypt" concerning their ability "to obtain officially issued identification cards."

> *The Universal House of Justice 21 December 2006*
>
> *To the Bahá'ís of Egypt*
>
> *Dearly loved Friends,*
>
> *We have received the distressing news that on 16 December, the Supreme Administrative Court in Cairo ruled against the decision of a lower court that permitted Bahá'ís to obtain officially issued identification cards. We wholly sympathize in your disappointment that justice was not served by a ruling that robs the members of your community of so critical a right of Egyptian citizens owing only to your beliefs. But you must stand firm and persevere in your effort to win affirmation of this right. To do less would be to deprive the authorities in Egypt of the opportunity to correct a wrong which has implications for many*

others, no less than for yourselves. Moreover, to relent would be to disregard the moral courage of those organizations, media, and persons of goodwill who have joined their voices to yours in the quest for a just solution to a serious inequity.

In explaining the court's decision to the press, the presiding judge stated that the Egyptian constitution recognizes only three religions: Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. This argument misses the essence, obscures the issue. Surely you are not asking here for the Bahá'í Faith to be recognized. Like other Egyptian citizens, you simply wish to be free to carry out the requirement of the civil law that you must obtain identification cards without making a false statement about your religious beliefs. Possessing such a card is a common right to which every native-born Egyptian is entitled. But how strange it is that the custodians of the law would themselves oblige you to violate a government policy that all citizens without exception are expected to observe! It is, of course, worthy of praise that the judges so publicly upheld the validity of three of the divine religions. As a community that believes that all God's chosen Messengers are "seated upon the same throne, uttering the same speech, and proclaiming the same Faith", the Bahá'ís of Egypt have no difficulty embracing the truths of the three religions mentioned. But to what purpose were their names invoked? Was it to justify the exclusion of certain citizens from exercising their civil rights? Would this not amount to a misuse of the authority of these Faiths to perpetrate an injustice that offends the high standard of justice to which they hold their adherents? But your interest is not in a theological tug-of-war with the Egyptian judiciary, despite its gross misrepresentation of the Bahá'í Faith: it is in the application of the principles of equity, fairness, and honesty that are so vital to those of all faiths and no faith. The ruling was unreasonable not only because it is contrary to prescriptions set forth in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Egypt is a signatory, but more especially because the sacred scriptures of Islam extol tolerance as a precept of social stability.

This incident calls to mind the occasion more than eight decades ago when Egyptian judicial and ecclesiastical authorities considered the claims of our Faith, not in a sympathetic effort but with the intent to oppose. A case involving three Muslim men who had become Bahá'ís in a village prompted their interest. As a result, the appellate religious court of Beba delivered a verdict on 10 May 1925 that denounced the Bahá'í Faith and annulled the marriages of these men. Nevertheless, from the judges' scrupulous study of Bahá'í scriptures, they arrived at the accurate conclusion that the Bahá'í Faith was "a new religion", "entirely

independent", with "beliefs, principles and laws" of its own. This verdict was sanctioned at the time by Egypt's highest ecclesiastical authorities. If Egyptian magistrates were capable then of such clear perception, and others in a local court have so recently shown a similar awareness, it seems reasonable to trust that this capacity will in the future reassert itself positively at the highest level of authority in your country.

Well beyond a century ago, during the lifetime of Bahá'u'lláh, His Faith took root in your homeland. Despite instances of opposition, it flourished in a climate of intellectual ferment. As early as 1934 your National Spiritual Assembly was incorporated, thus assuming a legal personality that enabled it to function according to Bahá'í procedures and to hold properties, including a National Center and a cemetery. Then suddenly in 1960, without forewarning, Presidential Decree no. 263 was issued, banning your national and local institutions and confiscating your properties and other assets. For nearly five decades now the members of your community have been subjected to humiliation of all kinds, including the harassment of police surveillance and false arrests. Until now no evidence has been adduced to prove that you have been unworthy of the public's trust, while there is much to confirm that you made noteworthy contributions towards fostering the spiritual, intellectual, and cultural character of the Egyptian people. In this regard, we recall with deep emotion and pride the distinguished services to your country and community of your late Bahá'í compatriot Hussein Bikar, who, despite having received a presidential award honoring his outstanding achievements as an artist, was denied an Egyptian identification card up until the time of his death.

This is no time, however, to dwell on a litany of the vexations your community has for so long sustained. It is, rather, an appropriate occasion for reflection on the broad context in which the recent action of the Supreme Administrative Court occurred, that from it you may derive an ever-larger sense of meaning and purpose.

Injustice is rife. Throughout the world it afflicts every department of life whether in the home, at the workplace, or in the public sphere as a consequence of the ill conduct of individuals, groups, or governments. Lamenting the horrors it breeds, Bahá'u'lláh made this poignant remark: "Justice is, in this day, bewailing its plight, and Equity groaneth beneath the yoke of oppression. The thick clouds of tyranny have darkened the face of the earth, and enveloped its peoples." So grave a situation exists at a time of unprecedented change: opposite processes of chaos

and of order interact in a spiral of turbulence that signals a transition in the spiritual and social agenda of the world as a whole.

Human society has arrived at a stage in its evolution when unity of the whole human race is imperative. To not appreciate this reality is to not grasp the meaning of the current crisis in world affairs. The principle of the oneness of humankind identifies the code for resolving the far-reaching issues involved. As Bahá'ís, you understand that this principle implies not only the ultimate peaceful goal that it signifies but involves, as well, your participation in the painful tasks entailed in attaining it. Hence, you appreciate the global connotations of instances of oppression at home or abroad and accept the responsibility of striving, guided by the principles of the Faith and in collaboration with others whenever possible, to combat injustice, for the common good.

Those groups supporting you in your current encounter are of a world-embracing vision and are themselves prepared to withstand the harsh resistance to their selfless occupation, sustaining blows of injustice in the process. As the rise of justice ensures the appearance of unity in the world, all who take on the formidable challenges of struggling for it have indeed captured the spirit of the age epitomized in the principle of oneness. To the extent that the fight for justice contributes to the establishment of a single global standard of human rights, the organizations in Egypt so engaged are working towards achieving the unification of their nation's peoples. They are thus committing themselves in large measure to the vital task of reconciling the tensions that bedevil their society and delay the attainment of its unity. Such reconciliation should not be impossible to Egypt's people, who can take pride in the celebrated enlightenment that in a glorious past ensured their unity in a flourishing society. Undoubtedly, Egypt will rise to participate, as befits its stature, in the fruition of that destiny of world peace and prosperity of which all nations dream.

Be assured of our ardent prayers in the Holy Shrines on behalf of each and every one of the members of your community and for the progress of all your compatriots in that land of ancient splendor.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Comments

December 22. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi announced a loss of voting rights for those Bahá’ís remaining in freemasonry. Previously, 'Abdu’l-Bahá had permitted membership in freemason lodges and had even encouraged the Bahá’ís of Manchester to emulate the freemasons.

Original file: 0467.html (position #45)

December 22. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles announcing a loss of voting rights for those Bahá’ís remaining in freemasonry. Previously, 'Abdu’l-Bahá had permitted membership in freemason lodges and had even ncouraged the Bahá’ís of Manchester to emulate the freemasons.

> *124: MASONRY, FREE (Membership in)*
>
> *"Disapprove membership (in) Freemasonry." "Any Bahá'í determined retain membership (in) Freemasonry loses voting rights."*
>
> *"The directive regarding membership in Freemasonry should be carried out by your Assembly in all areas under your Assembly's jurisdiction."*

'Abdu'l-Bahá had permitted membership in freemason lodges

> *A student of the modern methods of the higher criticism asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he would do well to continue in the church with which he had been associated all his life, and whose language was full of meaning to him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered: "You must not dissociate yourself from it. Know this; the Kingdom of God is not in any Society; some seekers go through many Societies as a traveller goes through many cities till he reach his destination. If you belong to a Society already do not forsake your brothers. You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán. The number nine contains eight, and seven, and all the other numbers, and does not deny any of them. Do not distress or deny anyone by saying 'He is not a Bahá'í!'*

In fact, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had encouraged the Bahá'ís of Manchester to emulate the freemasons...

> *October 1921*
>
> *In the Name of God! O Sincere Servant of the Blessed Beauty!*

Your detailed letter has been received, and has been the cause of the utmost joy and gladness. Praise be to God! The loved ones are all astir and active, but prudence is necessary. You have rent the veil too widely asunder. Explain to the loved ones that the rending of the veil to such an extent will be the cause of great agitation, and the harm thereof will reach to the Holy Land. Great caution is necessary. Discourses in churches and great public gatherings are in no wise permitted as in this place enemies, within and

without, are lying in wait and are bent on aggression. Prudence requires that activity should, for the present, be concealed and carried on with the utmost moderation. Convey to the loved ones, one and all, on my behalf, the greatest longing, love and kindness. Give a spiritual message from me to Mr. Healds and say unto him: “Peruse the Gospel, how His Holiness Christ – may my life be a sacrifice to Him – says, ‘Conceal it, that the Pharisees may not be informed thereof.’ Now the same condition prevails.”

> *This matter is of the greatest importance. On no account let them contribute articles to the newspapers, and so long as they are not sure of any soul, let them breath no word to him. Consider how the Freemasons have for two hundred years carried on their work, and unto this day they have not openly declared it to any soul. Not until they find a hearing ear will they speak. The loved ones too must proceed with the greatest prudence, lest serious difficulties be created. If any one should travel to the Holy Land, he must on no account declare to anyone by the way that his purpose is to visit us. The loved ones must, in the presence of strangers, speak forth simply the teachings of the Blessed Beauty and mention no word of the belief concerning Him. Should anyone inquire, “What is your belief regarding the Blessed Beauty?” let them answer: “We regard Him as the foremost teacher and educator of these later ages and Abdu’l-Baha as the Centre of His Covenant.”*

The original scanned document can be found at http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/docs/vol13/Barstow_600-623.pdf , where it is labeled BC#608. It was published through H-Net's Documents on the Shaykhi, Babi and Baha'i Movements

On July 24, 1953, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan stated that "So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not...they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order. When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere."

> *1384. Affiliation with Faith Alone is Insufficient*

"So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not. The tenets of the Bahá'í Faith are simple as outlined by the Guardian, but they do not permit of any variations. In other words, if any members of the ... Movement wish to become Bahá'ís, they will be most welcome; but they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order.

"When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere...."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan, July 24, 1953: Japan Will Turn Ablaze, pp. 76-77)

On March 26, 1956, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer told him how to go about resigning from his Masonic Order with an explanation not to "prejudice the Masons or their friends, or arouse in them a feeling of anger against the Faith, or indeed need involve the Faith at all."

1390. Resignation from the Masonic Order

"As regards your question about the Masonic Order, he considers that the honest and courageous thing for you to do is to inform your Lodge that you no longer consider yourself, for purely personal reasons, a Mason; and would like to have your name taken off their list. If they should press you for an explanation, which he imagines is unlikely, everybody being free to do as they please in this world, you can explain to them that in the present chaotic period the world is passing through, with so many streams and counterstreams of political thoughts and prejudices of all kinds, racial, religious, etc., storming the minds of men, that you wish to disentangle yourself from all association with the past and to stand alone, free in your own ideas.

"He does not think that such an explanation will prejudice the Masons or their friends, or arouse in them a feeling of anger against the Faith, or indeed need involve the Faith at all."

> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 26, 1956)*

'Abdu'l-Bahá had previously permitted membership in freemason lodges and non-Bahá'í religious organizations.

During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had the following interaction with a Christian...

> *A student of the modern methods of the higher criticism asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he would do well to continue in the church with which he had been associated all his life, and whose language was full of meaning to him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered: "**You must not dissociate yourself from it.** Know this; the Kingdom of God is not in any Society; some seekers go through many Societies as a traveller goes through many cities till he reach his destination. If you belong to a Society already do not forsake your brothers. **You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán.** The number nine contains eight, and seven, and all the other numbers, and does not deny any of them. Do not distress or deny anyone by saying 'He is not a Bahá'í!'*

During his tour of North America in 1912, coverage in news stories would report this comment.

For example, on February 18, 1912, an article in "The Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Press" featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion, in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religions. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case may be, and still being thorough going Bahis." During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

And on February 28, 1912, the "SFO Daily News" of San Francisco featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religious. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case mya be, and still being thorough going Bahá'ís" During his visit to

London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

Similarly, on September 1, 1912, "The Oregonian" of Portland, Oregon carried an article about 'Abdu'l-Bahá, introducing him as the "Leader of Religions Movement Which Claims Three Million Followers" and quoting his statement "When in London he was approached by a student of higher criticism who asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he should continue in the church. 'Abdu'l-Bahá replied: "Yes, you must not dissociate yourself from it. Know this: the Kingdom of God is not in any society. If you belong to a society already do not forsake your brothers. You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, Bahá'í-Mohammedan."

In fact, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had encouraged the Bahá'ís of Manchester to emulate the freemasons...

> *October 1921*
>
> *In the Name of God! O Sincere Servant of the Blessed Beauty!*
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> *Your detailed letter has been received, and has been the cause of the utmost joy and gladness. Praise be to God! The loved ones are all astir and active, but prudence is necessary. You have rent the veil too widely asunder. Explain to the loved ones that the rending of the veil to such an extent will be the cause of great agitation, and the harm thereof will reach to the Holy Land. Great caution is necessary. Discourses in churches and great public gatherings are in no wise permitted as in this place enemies, within and without, are lying in wait and are bent on aggression. Prudence requires that activity should, for the present, be concealed and carried on with the utmost moderation. Convey to the loved ones, one and all, on my behalf, the greatest longing, love and kindness. Give a spiritual message from me to Mr. Healds and say unto him: "Peruse the Gospel, how His Holiness Christ – may my life be a sacrifice to Him – says, 'Conceal it, that the Pharisees may not be informed thereof.' Now the same condition prevails."*
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> *proceed with the greatest prudence, lest serious difficulties be created. If any one should travel to the Holy Land, he must on no account declare to anyone by the way that his purpose is to visit us. The loved ones must, in the presence of strangers, speak forth simply the teachings of the Blessed Beauty and mention no word of the belief concerning Him. Should anyone inquire, "What is your belief regarding the Blessed Beauty?" let them answer: "We regard Him as the foremost teacher and educator of these later ages and Abdu'l-Baha as the Centre of His Covenant."*

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Numerous statements by Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice would later contradict these statements, with Bahá'ís being explicity prohibited from associating with any other faiths.

On July 24, 1953, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan stated that "So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not...they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order. When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere."

> *1384. Affiliation with Faith Alone is Insufficient*
>
> *"So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not. The tenets of the Bahá'í Faith are simple as outlined by the Guardian, but they do not permit of any variations. In other words, if any members of the ... Movement wish to become Bahá'ís, they will be most welcome; but they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order.*

> *"When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere...."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan, July 24, 1953: Japan Will Turn Ablaze, pp. 76-77)*

For example, on August 5, 1955, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer...

> *1387. Bahá'ís Belonging to Churches, Synagogues, Freemasonry and the Like*
>
> *"**As regards the question of Bahá'ís belonging to churches, synagogues, Freemasonry, etc.,** the friends must realize that now that the Faith is over 100 years old, and its own institutions arising, so to speak, rapidly above-ground, the distinctions are becoming ever sharper, and **the necessity for them to support whole-heartedly their own institutions and cut themselves off entirely from those of the past, is now clearer than ever before.** The eyes of the people of the world are beginning to be focused on us; and, as humanity's plight goes from bad to worse, we will be watched ever more intently by non-Bahá'ís, to see whether we do uphold our own institutions wholeheartedly; whether we are the people of the new creation or not; whether we live up to our beliefs, principles and laws in deed as well as word. We cannot be too careful. We cannot be too exemplary.*
>
> *"There is another aspect to this question which the friends should seriously ponder, and that is that, whereas organizations such as Freemasonry may have been in the past entirely free from any political taint, in the state of flux the world is in at present, and the extraordinary way in which things become corrupted and tainted by political thought and influences, there is no guarantee that such an association might not gradually or suddenly become a political instrument. The less Bahá'ís have to do, therefore, with such things, the better."*

On November 21, 1968, a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland stated that "If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í...one cannot

be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization...For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians."

532. On Becoming a Bahá'í Should Withdraw from Church

"If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í.

"In the case of new believers, it should be made clear to them in the course of teaching them the Faith that one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization. This is simply a matter of straight-forwardness and honesty. A great part of the teaching of Jesus Christ concerned His Second Coming and the preparation of His followers to be ready for it. The Bahá'ís believe He has come. No Christian Church believes this; on the contrary, they either look for Him still, or have ceased to believe that He will come. For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians.

"You should not formalize the method by which the withdrawal from the church is to be made, and certainly nothing should be added to a declaration form, if you use one. It should be left to the Local Spiritual Assembly which is accepting the declaration to satisfy itself, as it deems best in each case, that the new believer has already resigned from the church, or does so within a reasonable time of his declaration.

"In regard to the old believers, your Assembly should tactfully, and in a kindly way, make the Bahá'í position clear to them and gently persuade them to resign from their former churches. This is a matter for great tact and discretion. If such a believer remains adamant you will have to consider depriving him of his voting rights."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland, November 21, 1968: Canadian Bahá'í News, Special Section, March 1973, p. 6)

On February 17, 1956, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer

stated that "all the Bahá'ís everywhere have been urged to give up their old affiliations and withdraw from membership in the Masonic and other secret Societies."

> *1388. Bahá'ís Requested to Withdraw from Masonic and Other Secret Societies*
>
> *"As regards your question about Masonry, the Bahá'ís, the Guardian feels very strongly, must learn at the present time to think internationally and not locally. Although each believer realizes that he is a member of one great spiritual family, a member of the New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, he does not often carry this thought through to its logical conclusion: which is that if the Bahá'ís all over the world each belong to some different kind of society or church or political party, the unity of the Faith will be destroyed, because inevitably they will become involved in doctrines and policies that are in some way against our Teachings, and often against another group of people in another part of the world, or another race, or another religious block.*
>
> *"Therefore, all the Bahá'ís everywhere have been urged to give up their old affiliations and withdraw from membership in the Masonic and other secret Societies in order to be entirely free to serve the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh as a united body. Such groups as Masonry, however high the local standard may be, are in other countries gradually being influenced by the issues sundering the nations at present.*
>
> *"The Guardian wants the Bahá'ís to disentangle themselves from anything that may in any way, now or in the future, compromise their independent status as Bahá'ís and the supra-national nature of their Faith."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 17, 1956)*

On February 12, 1956, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer addressing "Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc." explaining "that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with secret societies, or with political

movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character."

1389. Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc.

"The point is not that there is something intrinsically wrong with Masonry, which no doubt has many very high ideals and principles, and has had a very good influence in the past.

"The reasons why the Guardian feels that it is imperative for the Bahá'ís to be dissociated from masonry at this time, and I might add, other secret associations, is that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character.

"Another reason is that unfortunately the tremendous political influences in the world today are seeping deeper and deeper into men's minds; and movements which in the past were absolutely uninfluenced by any political tinge of thought now in many places are becoming infiltrated with political side-taking and political issues; and it becomes all the more important for the Bahá'ís to withdraw from them in order to protect the Faith.

"The Guardian believes that you, as an intelligent man, a Bahá'í, will see the need for this. It is only by all living according to general principles that we can knit the fabric of the Faith all over the world into a closer unity.

"He is fully aware that certain individuals are struck much more forcibly by such requests than others. This has been the case with some of the old Bahá'ís in England, who have been Masons from their boyhood on; but, as it is his duty to protect the Faith, he can only appeal to the Bahá'ís to assist him in doing so; and to consider the general good, rather than their personal feelings, however deep they

> *may be, in such matters."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 12, 1956)*

Comments

December 22. On this date in 2002, the Bahá'í World News Service reported the Club of Budapest's honoring FUNDAEC with a Change the World -- Best Practice Award. FUNDAEC's current program director is Bita Correa, niece Farzam Arbab and daughter of Gustavo Correa.

Original file: 0466.html (position #44)

December 22. On this date in 2002, the Bahá'í World News Service reported the Club of Budapest's honoring FUNDAEC with a Change the World -- Best Practice Award. FUNDAEC's current program director is Bita Correa, niece Farzam Arbab and daughter of Haleh Arbab and Gustavo Correa.

Haleh Arbab Correa is currently director of the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity, a non-profit educational and research organization "dedicated to building capacity in individuals, groups and institutions to contribute to prevalent discourses concerned with the betterment of society" through "working in collaboration with the Bahá'í International Community." Born in Iran and educated in the United States, Haleh

Arbab previously lived in Colombia from 1982 to 2005 where she worked with the FUNDAEC.

Haleh Arbab is married to **Gustavo Correa**. Since 2008, Gustavo Correa has been a member of the Universal House of Justice. Before his election to the Universal House of Justice, in 2005, he was appointed to the International Teaching Centre. Along with his brother-in-law, Farzam Arbab, Gustavo Correa was one of the founders of FUNDAEC and later served as its Director, the position currently held by his daughter, **Bita Correa.**

Aside from being FUNDAEC's current program director, Bita Correa participated as a member of the Bahá'í International Community's delegation to the 55th United Nations Commission for Social Development. A recent graduate of Bryn Mawr College, Bita Correa is the daughter of Haleh Arbab, Farzam Arbab's sister, and Gustavo Correa.

Haleh Arbab is the sister of **Farzam Arbab**. Initially elected in 1993 to the Universal House of Justice, the supreme governing institution of the Bahá'í Faith, Farzam Arbab retired from that body in 2013. Before his election to the Universal House of Justice, in 1988, he was appointed to the International Teaching Center. The International Teaching Centre, whose seat is at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel, is composed of nine Counsellors appointed by the Universal House of Justice and tasked with duties to stimulate and coordinate the Continental Board of Counselors and assist the Universal House of Justice in matters relating to the teaching and protection of the faith. All of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as members of the International Teaching Centre. In 1980 he was appointed to the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Protection and Propagation of the Faith in the Americas, on which he served for eight years. From 1970 until 1980 he served as the Chairman for the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Colombia.

While in Colombia, Farzam Arbab was one of the founders of **FUNDAEC (Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences)**. He served as its Director from 1974 through 1988 and continues to serve on its board. FUNDAEC was established in 1974 by a group in Colombia who were looking for new strategies to develop the capacities of people and to generate knowledge in isolated regions of the country. The model, known as SAT (for "Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial, Spanish for "System for Tutorial Learning") started in 1980 and centers on the use of interactive workbooks facilitated by a tutor. In Colombia, these tutors are trained at the Center for Rural Education.

The SAT techniques Arbab helped develop at FUNDAEC have been applied to the Bahá'í community in the form of the **Ruhi Institute,** which was named after Arbab's father.

Centered on Bahá'í study circles, the goal of the Ruhi Institute courses is to "evoke a transformative learning experience through a learner-centered, experiential, and collaborative approach facilitated by a tutor rather than an instructor, a teacher, or an expert." Among the principles of the Ruhi curriculum is the utilization of service projects to implement learning into tangible action. The Universal House of Justice has encouraged the emulation of the Ruhi model throughout the global Bahá'í community. According to one researcher, the Ruhi Institute's method has resulted in "nonhierarchical, self-initiated, self-organized small groups engaged in study, teaching, and action" and is "becoming the core of Bahá'í community life worldwide as the outcome of a process that has sought to nurture the spiritual life of individuals and families and to establish social foundations for the vision and practice of religious world citizenship." Paul Lample, another member of the Universal Hose of Justice, has stated "Doubtless the institute and its curriculum will continue to evolve, both in content and form, to a level of greater complexity in regions and nations within the framework of the administrative order throughout the various stages of the Divine Plan in the second century of the Formative Age."

Farzam Arbab's son is **Paul Arbab**. "Born in the US, Paul grew up in Colombia. He holds an MBA and joined the board of Unity Foundation in January 2007. Since then he has been able to provide valuable input to the strategic direction of the Foundation. He is a proud father of two toddlers and strongly believes in the power of education." Paul Arab is the Administrator of Unity Foundation.

Unity Foundation, which works with Luxembourg's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and "a network of local development agencies assisting them in their efforts to build capacity amongst populations to take charge of their own social and economic development" is "governed by a board of directors which regularly meets to consult on the strategic direction of the organization. The day-to-day work is being carried out by the office team. Our external consultancy body, the Office of Social and Economic Development (OSED) in Haifa, Israel connects us to grass-root development agencies which have the capacity to work with external funding organization. OSED and the [Luxembourg] Ministry of Foreign Affairs act as two filters ensuring the quality and integrity of our projects."

> *Baha'i-inspired educational system for the poor of the world honored by the Club of Budapest 22 December 2002*
>
> *FRANKFURT, Germany — The Club of Budapest has honored FUNDAEC, a Baha'i-inspired development organization in Colombia, with a "Change the World -- Best*

Practice Award" for its achievements in providing high school education and training to more than 50,000 people living in rural areas in Latin America.

In his speech at the award ceremony, Peter Spiegel, the Secretary General of the Club of Budapest, characterized the project as "the most considerable revolution of education in the twentieth century."

"The genius of this new educational model," Mr. Spiegel explained, "lies in the fact that it teaches people living in Third World Countries to take charge of their own development processes and begin to interact as equals with the rest of the world."

Known as SAT (for "Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial, which means "System for Tutorial Learning" in Spanish), the tutorial learning program is built around a series of highly interactive workbooks, which enable specially trained tutors, who may themselves have little formal education, to offer a high quality secondary educational program in rural areas with minimal overhead cost.

The ceremony, held at the historic St. Paul's Church in Frankfurt on 6 October, was attended by honorary members of the Club of Budapest Sir Peter Ustinov and Paulo Coelho, who were granted the Club's Planetary Consciousness Award. Also at the event was Istvan Hiller, personal assistant to the Hungarian Prime Minister Peter Medgyessy, whose presence reinforced the support of the Hungarian government for the Club's efforts in promoting the emergence of planetary consciousness and supporting exemplary, like-minded projects. In all, some 1,000 people were present.

The Change the World -- Best Practice Award was given to four international educational projects that aim at empowering people through learning and enabling them to take full control of their economic development.

Other "Change the World" recipients this year were Aguida Zanol, representing Reciclar-Institut in Brazil, which seeks to connect art, ecology and social development; Nina Kostina of the Frank Foundation, which has sought to help orphans from former countries of the Soviet Union; and Marcia Odell, representing the Women's Empowerment Program in Nepal, which has developed an innovative approach to microfinance and the empowerment of women. The WEP program has reached more than 130,000 women in Nepal and has also received considerable support from the Baha'i community of Nepal.

Gustavo Correa, Director of FUNDAEC and one of the founders of the project,

represented the Foundation at the ceremony. He said the award this was a big step in the recognition of the FUNDAEC program. "Although our initial efforts started out very small and humble, as time went by, more experience and confidence were gained and in 1980 SAT, the Tutorial Learning System, was born," Dr. Correa said. "While our first materials were developed and tested only in the North Cauca Region of Colombia, with the official recognition of the Ministry of Education in Colombia SAT has been implemented in other parts of South and Central America as well. At present the SAT program is used for secondary education in Honduras, Guatemala, Ecuador, Venezuela, Panama, Costa Rica, Brazil, and Colombia. At the same time the first phases of the implementation of the program have started in Zambia, too," said Dr. Correa.

FUNDAEC (Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences) was established in 1974 by a group of professors at the University of Valle in Colombia who were looking for new strategies to develop the capacities of people and to generate knowledge in isolated regions of the country.

The program is rooted in rural reality, based upon the needs of the local residents with the aim of strengthening local economies and communal identity. SAT offers students a high school education that not only provides them with theoretical knowledge, as most traditional educational practices do, but also allows them to become independent and to serve their own communities.

"When started this project, we were originally inspired by a quotation from Baha'u'llah, the prophet founder of the Baha'i Faith," said Dr. Correa. "Baha'u'llah talks about man as 'a mine rich in gems of inestimable value.' He says that 'education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom'. In FUNDAEC we firmly believe that there is significant hidden potential within every individual, a potential which, if nurtured, may foster the spirit of service and contribute to the well-being of the whole community."

SAT is open to, and in most countries free for, everyone. Students usually pay only for their textbooks. To date, the six-year study program has been completed by 50,000 students, and there are currently about 30,000 youth attending various levels of SAT courses. Participants are not only strengthening their own sense of identity and purpose but are also starting to realize the importance of the community and are gaining a sense of unity.

"The basic idea behind FUNDAEC is a sense of spiritual transformation," said Dr.

Correa. "In the course of their studies the students discover the spirit of service and begin to consciously nurture their spiritual qualities. One of our students, for example, used to be a thief, and in the lapse of six months he became a useful member of his community, while one of the graduates was actually elected the mayor of his locality."

Each SAT course is facilitated by a tutor from the same locality as his or her students. Tutors are trained at the Center for Rural Education, the university founded by FUNDAEC in 1992. The five-year degree program offered there has also been officially approved by the government of Colombia and offers training in education.

Local SAT groups, guided by their tutor, apply the principles learned in the program, use their knowledge to become active in strengthening a sense of community identity where they live. Their activities demonstrate a wide range of diversity, from the implementation of sustainable productions systems to artistic and sporting events, and from educational activities for children to environmental projects.

Dietmar Schonherr, a well-known actor and the initiator of a development project in Nicaragua, presented the award to Dr. Correa. "FUNDAEC is based upon the need for a new concept of development aid," he said. "It is to be carried by the population itself, by its experiences of their daily reality."

Founded in 1993 by scientist and Club of Rome member Ervin Laszlo, the Club of Budapest was formed on the idea that the enormous challenges facing humanity today can only be dealt with through the widespread development of a cultural, cosmopolitan and global consciousness. The Club seeks to build bridges between cultures and generations through a variety of activities, including the recognition of significant accomplishments by individuals and organizations, such as through the "Change the World" award.

The Club of Budapest sees the Change the World -- Best Practice Award as the first step leading to long-term cooperation between the Club and FUNDAEC. "As a first step we are consulting with one of the German TV channels about the establishment of a new kind of talk show that would promote the mission of visionary projects such as FUNDAEC," explained Mr. Spiegel who has been observing the work of the Foundation for several years.

Comments

December 22. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote "There is no objection to leaving Bahá'í Literature in a public place as long as it is not overdone and does not savour of proselytizing."

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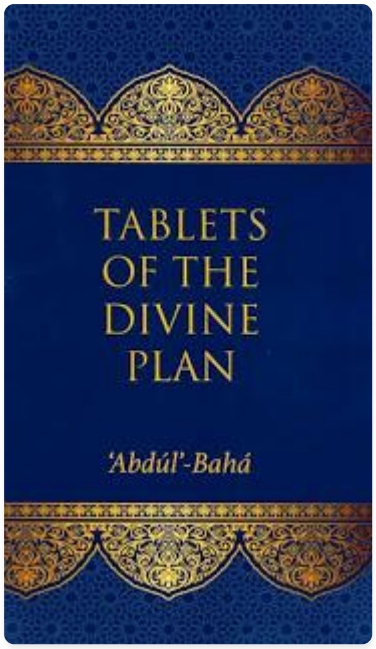
> *1963. There is no objection to leaving Bahá'í Literature in a public place as long as it is not overdone and does not savour of proselytizing.*
>
> *(From a letter dated 22 December 1947 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)*

Comments

December 23. On this date in 1918, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent his secretary Ahmad Sohrab to the United States to deliver the "Tablets of the Divine Plan," a collection of 14 letters written between September 1916 and March 1917 by 'Abdu’l-Bahá to Bahá’ís in the United States and Canada.

Original file: 0464.html (position #42)

December 23. On this date in 1918, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent his secretary Ahmad Sohrab to the United States to deliver the *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, a collection of 14 letters written between September 1916 and March 1917 by 'Abdu’l-Bahá to Bahá’ís in the United States and Canada. These collective letters, along with Bahá’u’lláh’s *Tablet of Carmel* and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* were described by Shoghi Effendi as three of the "Charters" of the Bahá’í Faith. Ahmad Sohrab would later be declared a Covenant-breaker by Shoghi Effendi.



Comments

December 23. On this date in 1979, the UHJ wrote an individual who raised "the question of the problem presented by the need to review scholarly works which may be the result of several years' research and detailed study of materials which may not be known to... those who must do the reviewing."

Original file: 0463.html (position #41)

December 23. On this date in 1979, the UHJ wrote an individual who raised "the question of the problem presented by the need to review scholarly works which may be the result of several years' research and detailed study of materials which may not be known to, or even available to those who must do the reviewing."

Comments

December 24. On this date in 1944 Shoghi Effendi wrote "...in direct proportion to the turmoil and the tribulations which such a participation has engendered...heralded the establishment of the Administrative Order of the Faith as well as the first stage in the development of the Seven Year Plan. "

Original file: 0462.html (position #40)

December 24. On this date in 1944 Shoghi Effendi wrote "Indeed, coincident with the period of America's direct participation in this world struggle and in direct proportion to the turmoil and the tribulations which such a participation has engendered, the members of this community have evinced a heroism and proved themselves capable of a concerted

effort that have eclipsed the notable achievements that have heralded the establishment of the Administrative Order of the Faith as well as the first stage in the development of the Seven Year Plan."

> *THE SUCCEEDING STAGE IN THE EVOLUTION OF THEIR WORLD MISSION*
>
> *1944, a year memorable for the sharp contrast between the rising tide of spiritual victories culminating in the Centenary celebrations of a world-embracing Faith and the swiftly ebbing fortunes of a war-ravaged, disillusioned and bankrupt society, is drawing to a close. In every continent of the globe; in the Holy Land, the Heart and Center of our Faith and Pivot of its institutions; in the land of its birth; in the adjoining territory of & Iraq; throughout the Western Hemisphere; in the British Isles, so severely subjected to the violence of a world tempest; throughout the length and breadth of India; in far-off Australasia and in the Nile Valley--all with the sole exception of the distant Republics of the West subjected in varying degrees to the imminent danger of becoming the theatre of war--the communities laboring for the promotion of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh have, throughout five tumultuous years, been providentially spared to hold aloft its banner, to preserve its integrity, to maintain the continuity of its institutions, to enrich its annals, to consolidate its structure, to further disseminate its literature and to befittingly celebrate its Centenary. Preponderant indeed has been the share of that privileged community, which has been invested by the Pen of the Center of the Covenant with a world-wide mission, in the prosecution of a task which, ever since the onset of this world upheaval and despite its mounting horrors, the builders of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh have so unflaggingly pursued. Neither the participation of the Great Republic of the West in this fierce contest, nor the sorrows, burdens and restrictions which such direct association with the agonies of a travailing age has entailed, have thus far been capable of dimming the splendor of the exploits that have immortalized the record of the services of this community since the ascension of `Abdu'l-Bahá. Indeed, coincident with the period of America's direct participation in this world struggle and in direct proportion to the turmoil and the tribulations which such a participation has engendered, the members of this community have evinced a heroism and proved themselves capable of a concerted effort that have eclipsed the notable achievements that have heralded the establishment of the Administrative Order of the Faith as well as the first stage in the development of the Seven Year Plan.*

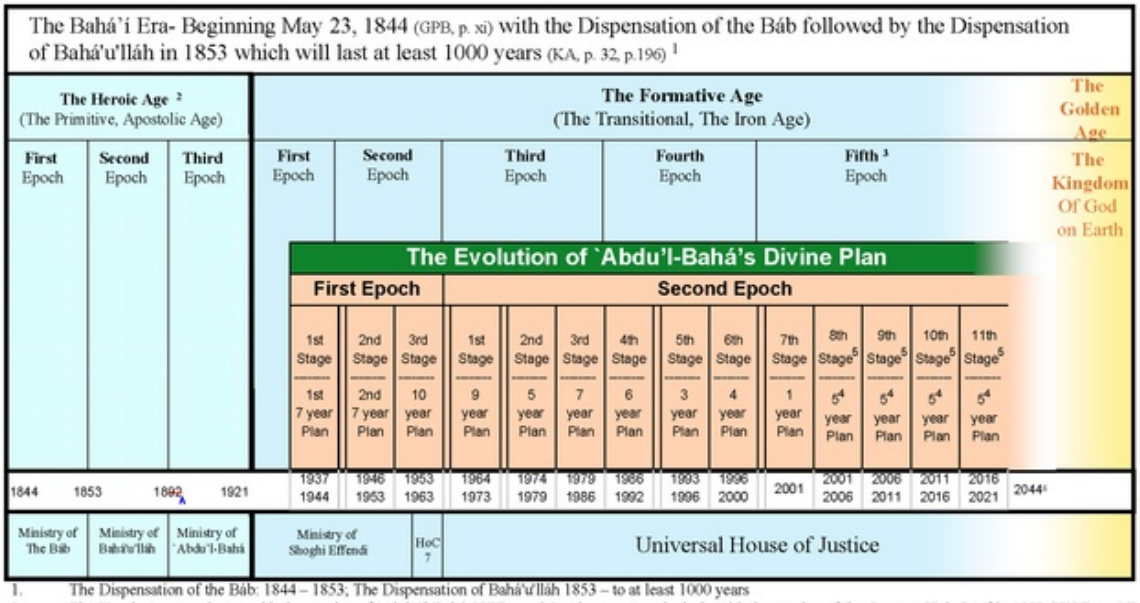
What the year 1945, on whose threshhold we now stand, has in store for the members of this determined, this valiant, this watchful, this exemplary community only the future can reveal. That the trials and afflictions suffered by their country and its people must wax as this world upheaval moves towards a climax no one can any longer doubt. The challenge that will face this stalwart community will no doubt be severe. To allow the prizes so nobly won, over so vast a field, at so great a cost, at so critical an hour, to fall into jeopardy would be unworthy of a career so auspiciously initiated, so completely dedicated to the Cause of God, so rich in promise and so brilliant in almost every phase of its evolution. Every local Assembly, the ordained pivot of a divinely-ordained System, which has been established in the States and Provinces of the North American continent, as well as in the Republics of Latin America, must, through a supreme effort on the part of pioneers, visiting teachers and Regional Committees, be steadfastly maintained. Simultaneously a no less determined effort should be exerted to enable the admittedly large number of groups scattered throughout the Americas to attain Assembly status. No less urgent is the obligation to proclaim the verities enshrined in the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh by every means which individuals, Assemblies and committees can devise, through the press and radio, through an unprecedented dissemination of literature, through its systematic translation into Spanish and Portuguese and above all through active association with leaders of public thought as well as direct contact with the masses of the people. Through such means as these, and through such means only can the members of the American Bahá'í Community, who have so audaciously and successfully launched the first stage of the Divine Plan, be enabled to pave the way and usher in, soon after the cessation of hostilities, the succeeding stage in the evolution of their world mission. My prayers and loving thoughts surround them continually in their devoted labors.

December 24, 1944

"We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh" FWU, p 54

THE MAJESTIC PROCESS: CYCLES, ERAS, AGES, EPOCHS and STAGES

The Bahá'í cycle – "…a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years." WOB, p 102


The Bahá'í Era- Beginning May 23, 1844 (GPB, p. xi) with the Dispensation of the Báb followed by the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh in 1853 which will last at least 1000 years (KA, p. 32, p.196) 1
The Heroic Age 2
(The Primitive, Apostolic Age)
First Epoch
Second Epoch
Third Epoch
The Formative Age
(The Transitional, The Iron Age)
First Epoch
Second Epoch
Third Epoch
Fourth Epoch
Fifth 3 Epoch
The Golden Age
The Kingdom Of God on Earth
The Evolution of `Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan
First Epoch
Second Epoch
1st Stage 1st 7 year Plan
2nd Stage 2nd 7 year Plan
3rd Stage 10 year Plan
1st Stage 9 year Plan
2nd Stage 5 year Plan
3rd Stage 7 year Plan
4th Stage 6 year Plan
5th Stage 3 year Plan
6th Stage 4 year Plan
7th Stage 1 year Plan
8th Stage 5 5 year Plan
9th Stage 5 5 year Plan
10th Stage 5 5 year Plan
11th Stage 5 5 year Plan
1844 1853 1892 1921
1937 1944
1946 1953
1953 1963
1964 1973
1974 1979
1979 1986
1986 1992
1993 1996
1996 2000
2001
2001 2006
2006 2011
2011 2016
2016 2021
2044 6
Ministry of The Báb
Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh
Ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
Ministry of Shoghi Effendi
HoC 7
Universal House of Justice

1. The Dispensation of the Báb: 1844 – 1853; The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh 1853 – to at least 1000 years
2. The Heroic Age terminates with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (GPB, p. xiv). Also more particularly with the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1932 (WOB, p. 98)
3. Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age entered. (UHJ letter 16th January 2001)
4. The 5 Year Plan begins a series of four 5 Year Plans from 2001 – 2021, culminating in the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age. (UHJ letter Ridván 2001)
5. Stage number not yet known but presumed to continue in sequence of numbers from the 8th stage in 2001
6. See This Decisive Hour, p. 95 re: foundation of future civilizations to have been established during the second Bahá'í Century
7. Ministry of the Hands of the Cause. 1957 - 1963

Prepared by: John W. Conkling, assisted in graphics by J. Bernie. Jan. 14, 2004

Comments

December 24. On this date in 1986, the Lotus Temple was dedicated in India. It has won numerous architectural awards and been featured in hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles, becoming a global iconic Bahá'í symbol.

Original file: 0461.html (position #39)

December 24. On this date in 1986, the Lotus Temple was dedicated in India. It has won numerous architectural awards and been featured in hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles, becoming a global iconic Bahá'í symbol, allowing the name Bahá'í to be promoted to those who otherwise might no know of the Bahá'í Faith.

Comments

December 24. On this date in 1951 Shoghi Effendi appointed his first contingent of living individuals to the station of Hands of the Cause of God. Hands had previously been appointed by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá as well as certain deceased individuals named posthumously by Shoghi Effendi.

Original file: 0460.html (position #38)

December 24. On this date in 1951 Shoghi Effendi appointed his first contingent of living individuals to the station of Hands of the Cause of God. Hands of the Cause of God had previously been appointed by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá as well as certain deceased individuals named posthumously by Shoghi Effendi. The individuals named on December 24, 1951, included 12 individuals.

Some were wealthy contributors, like Amelia Engelder Collins, who provided funds for the

building of the Western Pilgrim House, the superstructure of the Shrine of the Báb the International Archives building and the purchasing of the land for the future Bahá'í House of Worship on Mount Carmel. Another, Ugo Giachery, was born to an Italian aristocratic family and would provide the marble supplies from Italy for the superstructure of the Shrine of the Báb and the International Archives Building.

Some were academics, like 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, who is known for his censorship of (devout Bahai scholar) Jinab-i Fadil's academic works.

Valíyu'lláh Varqá was the Trustee of the Huqúqu'lláh

William Sutherland Maxwell was an architect who designed the arcade and superstructure of the Shrine of the Báb and was Shoghi Effendi's father-in-law.

George Townshend was an Irish Anglican clergyman who had renounced his orders to the Anglican Church in 1947, at the age of 70.

Charles Mason Remey was the president of the International Bahá'í Council, created in 1951, and architect of the Bahá'í Houses of Worship in Uganda and Australia, and Shoghi Effendi approved his design of the unbuilt House of Worship in Haifa. After Shoghi Effendi's death Charles Mason Remey claimed to be the successor Guardian.

Comments

December 24. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote "There is no record in history, or in the teachings, of a Prophet similar in station to Bahá'u'lláh having lived 500,000 years ago. There will, however, be one similar to Him in greatness after the lapse of 500,000 years..."

Original file: 0459.html (position #37)

December 24. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding your questions: There is no record in history, or in the teachings, of a Prophet similar in station to Bahá'u'lláh having lived 500,000 years ago. There will, however, be one similar to Him in greatness after the lapse of 500,000 years, but we cannot say definitely that His Revelation will be inter-planetary in scope. We can only say that such a thing may be possible. What Bahá'u'lláh means by His appearance in 'other worlds' He has not defined, as we could not visualize them in our present state, hence He was indefinite, and we cannot say whether He meant other planets or not...."

1555. There is No Record of a Prophet Similar in Station to Bahá'u'lláh

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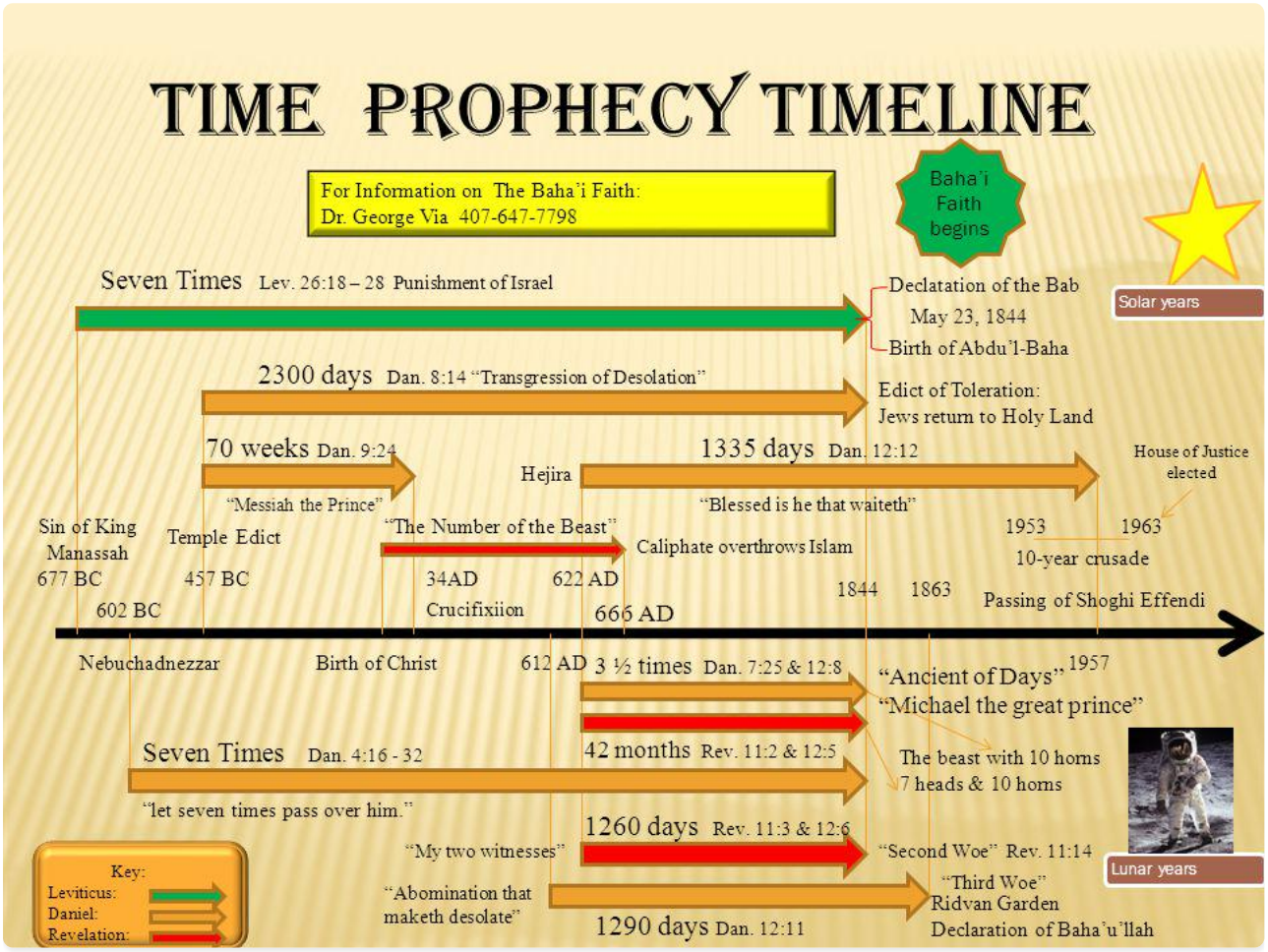
(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 24, 1941)



Comments

December 25. On this date in 1967, Charles William Dunning died. He had been named a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for pioneering to the Orkney Islands.

December 25. On this date in 1967, Charles William Dunning died. He had been named a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for pioneering to the Orkney Islands.

What has always struck me about the designation of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh is the arbitrariness with which the "virgin territories" were defined. For example, the Cook Islands and Tonga Island, both part of the Realm of New Zealand have distinct sets of Knights, while Niue and the Chatham Islands, also part of the Realm of New Zealand, are Knightless.

Several islands off the coast of Alaska have distinct Knights, like Baranof Island , Kodiak Island, and the Aleutian Islands. Yet other Alaskan islands, like the Pribilof Islands are Knightless.

The Brazilian state of Amapá has its own Knights (for Portuguese Guiana), while the other Brazilian states are Knightless.

Crete and Rhodes have Knights distinct from the Knights of mainland Greece, yet other Greek islands, like Santorini and Samos, are Knightless.

Key West has its own Knight, yet the other Florida Keys are Knightless.

Tiny islands, like Grand Manan, have their own Knights. St. Thomas Island has its own

Knight, yet the remaining Leeward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands. Similarly, the Windward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands.

Comments

December 25. On this date in 1957, the Custodians cabled "REJOICE INFORM BELIEVERS COVENANT BREAKERS' HOUSE Bahji, COMPLETELY EFFACED FULFILLING LONG CHERISHED DESIRE BELOVED GUARDIAN WHO PLANNED PERSONALLY SUPERVISE THIS LAST PURIFICATION HARAM-I-AQDAS STOP SHARE MESSAGE ALL HANDS NATIONAL BODIES.

December 25. On this date in 1957, the Custodians cabled "REJOICE INFORM BELIEVERS COVENANT BREAKERS' HOUSE Bahji, COMPLETELY EFFACED FULFILLING LONG CHERISHED DESIRE BELOVED GUARDIAN WHO PLANNED PERSONALLY SUPERVISE THIS LAST PURIFICATION HARAM-I-AQDAS STOP SHARE MESSAGE ALL HANDS NATIONAL BODIES."

> *BAHA'I WILMETTE*
>
> *DECEMBER 25,1957*
>
> *REJOICE INFORM BELIEVERS COVENANT BREAKERS' HOUSE Bahji, COMPLETELY EFFACED FULFILLING LONG CHERISHED DESIRE BELOVED GUARDIAN WHO PLANNED PERSONALLY SUPERVISE THIS LAST PURIFICATION HARAM-I-AQDAS STOP SHARE MESSAGE ALL HANDS NATIONAL BODIES ...*
>
> *[CABLE] HANDSFAITH*

September 6. On this date in 1957, two months before his death, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram announcing "Purification of Haram-i-Aqdas." This purification would be completed by the Universal House of Justice with the removal of the remains of Bahá'u'lláh's son Mirza Díyá'u'lláh, which had laid beside his father.

> *Purification of Haram-i-Aqdas*
>
> *Announce to Hands and all National Assemblies that following the loss of the appeal to the Supreme Court, the Government expropriation order has been implemented, resulting in the complete evacuation of the remnant of Covenant-breakers and the transfer of all their belongings from the precincts of the Most Holy Shrine, and the purification, after six long decades, of the Haram-i-Aqdas from every trace of their contamination. Measures under way to effect transfer of title deeds of the evacuated property to the triumphant Bahá'í community.*
>
> *--Shoghi*

> *[Cablegram, September 6, 1957]*

The "purification" is described in pages 248 and 249 of *The Bahá'í World: Volume 13 (1954-1963)*...

> *In April, 1957 Shoghi Effendi announced to the Bahá'í world that an expropriation order relating to the "entire property owned by Covenant-breakers within the Haram-i-Aqdas" had been issued by the Treasury Department of the Government of Israel and published in the Israel Official Gazette. Behinds this lay a hard and protracted struggle, waged in the Guardian's name by Leroy Ioas, Hand of the Cause in Haifa and Secretary-General of the International Bahá'í Council. An appeal against the appropriation order was made by the Covenant-breakers to Israel's Supreme Court, but on June 3, 1957 Shoghi Effendi cabled the triumphant news that the order had been upheld, "enabling the civil authorities to enforce the original decision and proceed with the* ***eviction of the wretched remnants of the once redoubtable adversaries*** *. . ." On September 6, 1957 a further cable announced their "complete evacuation . . . and the purification . . . of the Haram-i-Aqdas from every trace of* ***their contamination****." At long last the Qiblih of the Bahá'í world had been cleansed and the way opened to fulfill, in future decades, the Guardian's vision for the construction of a "stately and befitting Mausoleum designed to enshrine the holiest Dust the earth ever received into its bosom."*
>
> ***It had been Shoghi Effendi's wish to direct in person the razing of the buildings evacuated by the enemies of the Cause, but this was not to be, and it fell to the Hands of the Cause in Haifa to carry out this task.*** *It was their first endeavour, and by December, 1957 no trace of the buildings was left. They then proceeded to enlarge the gardens of the Haram-i-Aqdas according to the Guardian's plan, covering the site of the buildings entirely, and raising the third terrace he had planned toward the east, above the two he himself had completed. To the east of the Mansion a long strip of garden was planted, comprising four thousand square metres, also part of the Guardian's plan.*
>
> *The Hands succeeded, moreover, in effecting the Guardian's purpose to transfer the title deeds of this evacuated property* ***"to the triumphant Bahá'í community."*** *In a deed of sale from the State of Israel,* ***thirteen separate titles*** *for the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh , the Mansion of Bahjí, and all the newly-*

> *acquired properties were transferred to the name of the Israel Branch of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States.*
>
> ***Thus did the Sign of God on earth achieve ascendancy in his last hours, glorifying his ministry, and fulfilling one stage of his own promise for the World Centre of the Faith: "Resistlessly will this Divine institution flourish and expand, however fierce the animosity which its future enemies may evince, until the full measure of its splendour will have been disclosed before the eyes of all mankind."***

It should be noted that in this text Shoghi Effendi is called "the Sign of God on earth," which is what the term "Ayatollah" means.

Also, the "thirteen separate titles" include some property that a November 12, 1952 cablegram sent by Shoghi Effendi announced as "acquisition of vitally-needed property" of the Mansion of Bahji and the area around it from "the Development Authority of the State of Israel...The exchange of said property, including land and houses, was made possible by the **precipitate flight of the former Arab owners**."

The "purification" would continue under the Universal House of Justice, who on November 11, 1965 sent a cable announcing the "removal from immediate precincts (of the) holy shrine (of) Bahá'u'lláh remains (of) Mirza Díyá'u'lláh."

> *Purification of the Most Holy Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, the Qiblih of the Bahá'í World*
>
> *11 NOVEMBER 1965*
>
> *To all National Spiritual Assemblies*
>
> *26.1 ANNOUNCE BAHA'I WORLD REMOVAL FROM IMMEDIATE PRECINCTS HOLY SHRINE BAHA'U'LLAH REMAINS MIRZA DIYA'U'LLAH YOUNGER BROTHER MIRZA MUHAMMAD ALI HIS ACCOMPLICE IN EFFORTS SUBVERT FOUNDATIONS COVENANT GOD SOON AFTER ASCENSION BAHA'U'LLAH. THIS FINAL STEP IN PROCESS PURIFICATION SACRED INTERNATIONAL ENDOWMENTS FAITH IN BAHJI FROM PAST CONTAMINATION WAS PROVIDENTIALLY UNDERTAKEN UPON REQUEST FAMILY OLD COVENANT BREAKERS A PROCESS WHOSE INITIAL STAGE WAS FULFILLED BY ABDU'L-BAHA WHICH GATHERED MOMENTUM EARLY YEARS BELOVED GUARDIAN'S*

> *MINISTRY THROUGH EVACUATION MANSION ATTAINED CLIMAX THROUGH PURIFICATION HARAM-I-AQDAS AND NOW CONSUMMATED THROUGH CLEANSING INNER SANCTUARY MOST HALLOWED SHRINE QIBLIH Bahá'í WORLD PRESAGING EVENTUAL CONSTRUCTION BEFITTING MAUSOLEUM AS ANTICIPATED BELOVED SIGN GOD ON EARTH.*
>
> *UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE*

Comments

December 25. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter, later published as "The Advent of Divine Justice" addressed "to the beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the United States and Canada," describing the role of America in establishing the Most Great Peace.

Original file: 0456.html (position #34)

December 25. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter, later published as *The Advent of Divine Justice* addressed "to the beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the United States and Canada," describing the role of America in establishing the Most Great Peace. The work is divided into five parts.

In the first section, Shoghi Effendi notes the situation of the Bahá'í Faith in Central Asia (restricted under Soviet rule); Iran (repressed under the Pahlavi dynasty); Palestine (witnessing strife under the British mandate prior to the fulfillment of the partition promised in the Balfour declaration); and Germany (being banned under Nazi rule), which he notes "as predicted by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, is destined, by virtue of its spiritual potentialities and geographical situation, to radiate the splendor of the light of the Faith on the countries that surround it."

Shoghi Effendi continues...

> *The one chief remaining citadel, the mighty arm which still raises aloft the standard of an unconquerable Faith, is none other than the blessed community of the followers of the Most Great Name in the North American continent. By its works, and through the unfailing protection vouchsafed to it by an almighty Providence, this distinguished member of the body of the constantly interacting Bahá’í communities of East and West, bids fair to be universally regarded as the cradle, as well as the stronghold, of that future New World Order, which is at once the promise and the glory of the Dispensation associated with the name of Bahá’u’lláh.*
>
> *Let anyone inclined to either belittle the unique station conferred upon this community, or to question the role it will be called upon to play in the days to come, ponder the implication of these pregnant and highly illuminating words uttered by 'Abdu’l-Bahá, and addressed to it at a time when the fortunes of a world groaning beneath the burden of a devastating war had reached their lowest ebb. “The continent of America,” He so significantly wrote, “is, in the eyes of the one true God, the land wherein the splendors of His light shall be revealed, where the mysteries of His Faith shall be unveiled, where the righteous will abide, and the free assemble.”*

The first section continues to laud the North American Bahá’í community and list its achievements in having spread the Bahá’í Faith.

In the second section, Shoghi Effendi describes why the latest Manifestation had not appeared in North America.

> *Prophets of God, not excepting Bahá'u'lláh Himself, chosen to appear, and deliver their Message in countries and amidst peoples and races, at a time when they were either fast declining, or had already touched the lowest depths of moral and spiritual degradation....*
>
> *In the light of this fundamental principle it should always be borne in mind, nor can it be sufficiently emphasized, that the primary reason why the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh chose to appear in Persia, and to make it the first repository of their Revelation, was because, of all the peoples and nations of the civilized world, that race and nation had, as so often depicted by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, sunk to such ignominious depths, and manifested so great a perversity, as to find no parallel among its contemporaries...For any believer of that race to maintain that the excellence of his country and the innate nobility of its people were the fundamental reasons for its being singled out as the primary receptacle of the Revelations of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh would be untenable in the face of the overwhelming evidence afforded so convincingly by that Narrative [of Nabil, namely The Dawn-Breakers].*

Shoghi Effendi continues to address North Americans, with "its right to be regarded as the cradle of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh," describing the "spiritual prerequisites" for "that community to lay a firm foundation for the country's future role in ushering in the Golden Age of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh." He continues to describe these three spiritual prerequisites as "moral rectitude," "absolute chastity," and "complete freedom from prejudice."

In the third section Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the "The Seven Year Plan, with its twofold aspects of Temple ornamentation and extension of teaching activity, embracing both the Northern and Southern American continents."

He notes that the temple being built in Wilmette, Illinois, "should be regarded, at the present time, as no more than an instrument for a more effective propagation of the Cause and a wider diffusion of its teachings. In this respect it should be viewed in the same light as the administrative institutions of the Faith which are designed as vehicles for the proper dissemination of its ideals, its tenets, and its verities."

He goes into some detail regarding the methods with which North American believers should introduce the Bahá'í Faith to rest of the world.

It is, therefore, to the teaching requirements of the Seven Year Plan that the community of the American believers must henceforth direct their careful and sustained attention. The entire community must, as one man, arise to fulfill them. To teach the Cause of God, to proclaim its truths, to defend its interests, to demonstrate, by words as well as by deeds, its indispensability, its potency, and universality, should at no time be regarded as the exclusive concern or sole privilege of Bahá'í administrative institutions, be they Assemblies, or committees. All must participate, however humble their origin, however limited their experience, however restricted their means, however deficient their education, however pressing their cares and preoccupations, however unfavorable the environment in which they live. ***"God," Bahá'u'lláh, Himself, has unmistakably revealed, "hath prescribed unto everyone the duty of teaching His Cause." "Say," He further has written, "Teach ye the Cause of God, O people of Bahá, for God hath prescribed unto everyone the duty of proclaiming His Message, and regardeth it as the most meritorious of all deeds."***

"Peter," 'Abdu'l-Bahá has testified, "according to the history of the Church, was also incapable of keeping count of the days of the week. *Whenever he decided to go fishing, he would tie up his weekly food into seven parcels, and every day he would eat one of them, and when he had reached the seventh, he would know that the Sabbath had arrived, and thereupon would observe it." If the Son of Man was capable of infusing into apparently* ***so crude and helpless an instrument*** *such potency as to cause, in the words of Bahá'u'lláh, "the mysteries of wisdom and of utterance to flow out of his mouth," and to exalt him above the rest of His disciples, and render him fit to become His successor and the founder of His Church, how much more can* ***the Father, Who is Bahá'u'lláh, empower the most puny and insignificant among His followers to achieve, for the execution of His purpose, such wonders as would dwarf the mightiest achievements of even the first apostle of Jesus Christ!***

...

The field is indeed so immense, the period so critical, the Cause so great, the

> *workers so few, the time so short, the privilege so priceless, that no follower of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, worthy to bear His name, can afford a moment's hesitation...the American believers must now rise, and fully and courageously exploit them. "The holy realities of the Concourse on high," writes 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "yearn, in this day, in the Most Exalted Paradise, to return unto this world, so that they may be aided to render some service to the threshold of the Abhá Beauty, and arise to demonstrate their servitude to His sacred Threshold."*

...

> *Now is the time, the appointed time, for the American believers, the vanguard of the hosts of the Most Great Name, to proclaim, through the agencies and channels of a specially designed Administrative Order, their capacity and readiness to rescue a fallen and sore-tried generation that has rebelled against its God and ignored His warnings, and to offer it that complete security which only the strongholds of their Faith can provide.*

...

> *Those who participate in such a campaign, whether in an organizing capacity, or as workers to whose care the execution of the task itself has been committed, must, as an essential preliminary to the discharge of their duties, thoroughly familiarize themselves with the various aspects of the history and teachings of their Faith. In their efforts to achieve this purpose they must study for themselves, conscientiously and painstakingly, the literature of their Faith, delve into its teachings, assimilate its laws and principles, ponder its admonitions, tenets and purposes, commit to memory certain of its exhortations and prayers, master the essentials of its administration, and keep abreast of its current affairs and latest developments. They must strive to obtain, from sources that are authoritative and unbiased, a sound knowledge of the history and tenets of Islám—the source and background of their Faith—and approach reverently and with a mind purged from preconceived ideas the study of the* ***Qur'án which, apart from the sacred scriptures of the Bábí and Bahá'í Revelations, constitutes the only Book which can be regarded as an absolutely authenticated***

Repository of the Word of God. *They must devote special attention to the investigation of those institutions and circumstances that are directly connected with the origin and birth of their Faith, with the station claimed by its Forerunner, and with the laws revealed by its Author.*

Having acquired, in their essentials, these prerequisites of success in the teaching field, they must, whenever they contemplate undertaking any specific mission in the countries of Latin America, endeavor, whenever feasible, to acquire a certain proficiency in the languages spoken by the inhabitants of those countries, and a knowledge of their customs, habits, and outlook. "The teachers going to those parts," 'Abdu'l-Bahá, referring in one of the Tablets of the Divine Plan to the Central American Republics, has written, "must also be familiar with the Spanish language." "A party speaking their languages ...," He, in another Tablet, has written, "must turn their faces to and travel through the three great Island groups of the Pacific Ocean." "The teachers traveling in different directions," He further states, "must know the language of the country in which they will enter. For example, a person being proficient in the Japanese language may travel to Japan, or a person knowing the Chinese language may hasten to China, and so forth."

...

Having on his own initiative, and undaunted by any hindrances with which either friend or foe may, unwittingly or deliberately, obstruct his path, resolved to arise and respond to the call of teaching, let him carefully consider ***every avenue of approach which he might utilize in his personal attempts to capture the attention, maintain the interest, and deepen the faith, of those whom he seeks to bring into the fold of his Faith.*** *Let him survey the possibilities which the particular circumstances in which he lives offer him, evaluate their advantages, and proceed intelligently and systematically to utilize them for the achievement of the object he has in mind. Let him also attempt to devise such methods as* ***association with clubs, exhibitions, and societies, lectures on subjects akin to the teachings and ideals of his Cause such as temperance, morality, social welfare, religious and racial tolerance, economic cooperation, Islám, and Comparative Religion, or participation in social, cultural, humanitarian, charitable, and educational organizations and enterprises which, while safeguarding***

> ***the integrity of his Faith, will open up to him a multitude of ways and means whereby he can enlist successively the sympathy, the support, and ultimately the allegiance of those with whom he comes in contact.*** *Let him, while such contacts are being made, bear in mind the claims which his Faith is constantly making upon him to preserve its dignity, and station, to safeguard the integrity of its laws and principles, to demonstrate its comprehensiveness and universality, and to defend fearlessly its manifold and vital interests. Let him consider the* ***degree of his hearer's receptivity, and decide for himself the suitability of either the direct or indirect method of teaching,*** *whereby he can impress upon the seeker the vital importance of the Divine Message, and persuade him to throw in his lot with those who have already embraced it. Let him remember the example set by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and His constant admonition to shower such kindness upon the seeker, and exemplify to such a degree the spirit of the teachings he hopes to instill into him, that the recipient will be spontaneously impelled to identify himself with the Cause embodying such teachings. Let him* ***refrain, at the outset, from insisting on such laws and observances as might impose too severe a strain on the seeker's newly awakened faith, and endeavor to nurse him, patiently, tactfully, and yet determinedly, into full maturity, and aid him to proclaim his unqualified acceptance of whatever has been ordained by Bahá'u'lláh.*** *Let him, as soon as that stage has been attained, introduce him to the body of his fellow-believers, and seek, through constant fellowship and active participation in the local activities of his community, to enable him to contribute his share to the enrichment of its life, the furtherance of its tasks, the consolidations of its interests, and the coordination of its activities with those of its sister communities. Let him not be content until he has infused into his spiritual child so deep a longing as to impel him to arise independently, in his turn, and devote his energies to the quickening of other souls, and the upholding of the laws and principles laid down by his newly adopted Faith.*

...

> *In a word, no opportunity should be neglected, and no effort spared, to lay as broad and solid a basis as possible for the progress and development of the greatest teaching enterprise ever launched by the American Bahá'í community.*

> *The careful translation of such important Bahá'í writings as are related to the history, the teachings, or the Administrative Order of the Faith, and their wide and systematic dissemination, in vast quantities, and throughout as many of these Republics as possible, and in languages that are most suitable and needed, would appear to be the chief and most urgent measure to be taken simultaneously with the arrival of the pioneer workers in those fields. "Books and pamphlets," writes 'Abdu'l-Bahá in one of the Tablets of the Divine Plan, "must be either translated or composed in the languages of these countries and islands, to be circulated in every part and in all directions." In countries where no objections can be raised by the civil authorities or any influential circles, this measure should be reinforced by the publication, in various organs of the Press, of carefully worded articles and letters, designed to impress upon the general public certain features of the stirring history of the Faith, and the range and character of its teachings.*

In fact, most of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's works in Arabic and Persian have not been translated into other languages. The *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, the central book of the Bahá'í Faith written by Bahá'u'lláh, was only officially translated into English in 1992, by which time other translations, such as one by the Royal Asiatic Society, were becoming increasingly available through dissemination via the internet. My personal opinion is that the material in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is so objectionable that the Bahá'í authorities wished to shield Western believers from its contents, as they do from Bahá'u'lláh's other works by not providing translations.

Shoghi Effendi concludes the third section by emphasizing the importance of Panama.

> *Faithful to the provisions of the Charter laid down by the pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, I feel it my duty to draw the special attention of those to whom it has been entrusted to the urgent needs of, and the special position enjoyed by, the Republic of Panama, both in view of its relative proximity to the heart and center of the Faith in North America, and of its geographical position as the link between two continents. "All the above countries," 'Abdu'l-Bahá, referring to the Latin States in one of the Tablets of the Divine Plan, has written, "have importance, but especially the Republic of Panama, wherein the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans come together through the Panama Canal. It is a center for travel and passage from America to other continents of the world, and in the future it will gain most great importance." "Likewise," He again has written, "ye must give great attention to the Republic of*

> *Panama, for in that point the Occident and the Orient find each other united through the Panama Canal, and it is also situated between the two great oceans. That place will become very important in the future. The teachings, once established there, will unite the East and the West, the North and the South." So privileged a position surely demands the special and prompt attention of the American Bahá'í community. With the Republic of Mexico already opened up to the Faith, and with a Spiritual Assembly properly constituted in its capital city, the southward penetration of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh into a neighboring country is but a natural and logical step, and should, it is to be hoped, prove to be not a difficult one. No efforts should be spared, and no sacrifice be deemed too great, to establish even though it be a very small group in a Republic occupying, both spiritually and geographically, so strategic a position—a group which, in view of the potency with which the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá have already endowed it, cannot but draw to itself, as soon as it is formed, the outpouring grace of the Abhá Kingdom, and evolve with such marvelous swiftness as to excite the wonder and the admiration of even those who have already witnessed such stirring evidences of the force and power of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Preference, no doubt, should be given by all would-be pioneers, as well as by the members of the Inter-America Committee, to the spiritual needs of this privileged Republic, though every effort should, at the same time, be exerted to introduce the Faith, however tentatively, to the Republics of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica which would link it, in an unbroken chain, with its mother Assemblies in the North American continent. Obstacles, however formidable, should be surmounted, the resources of the Bahá'í treasury should be liberally expended on its behalf, and the ablest and most precious exertions should be consecrated to the cause of its awakening. The erection of yet another outpost of the Faith, in its heart, will constitute, I firmly believe, a landmark in the history of the Formative Period of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in the New World. It will create limitless opportunities, galvanize the efforts, and reinvigorate the life, of those who will have accomplished this feat, and infuse immense courage and boundless joy into the hearts of the isolated groups and individuals in the neighboring and distant Republics, and exert intangible yet powerful spiritual influences on the life and future development of its people.*

In the fourth section, Shoghi Effendi encourages the North American believers to fulfill the goals of the Seven Year Plan.

Upheavals, however cataclysmic, must never deflect their course. ***The present Plan, embodying the budding hopes of a departed Master, must be pursued, relentlessly pursued, whatever may befall them in the future, however distracting the crises that may agitate their country or the world.*** *Far from yielding in their resolve, far from growing oblivious of their task, they should, at no time, however much buffeted by circumstances, forget that the synchronization of such world-shaking crises with the progressive unfoldment and fruition of their divinely appointed task is itself the work of Providence, the design of an inscrutable Wisdom, and the purpose of an all-compelling Will, a Will that directs and controls, in its own mysterious way, both the fortunes of the Faith and the destinies of men. Such simultaneous processes of rise and of fall, of integration and of disintegration, of order and chaos, with their continuous and reciprocal reactions on each other, are but aspects of a greater Plan, one and indivisible, whose Source is God, whose author is Bahá'u'lláh, the theater of whose operations is the entire planet, and whose ultimate objectives are the unity of the human race and the peace of all mankind.*

Reflections such as these should steel the resolve of the entire Bahá'í community, should dissipate their forebodings, and arouse them to rededicate themselves to every single provision of that Divine Charter whose outline has been delineated for them by the pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

...

Such vacillation, failure, or neglect, the American believers, the ambassadors of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, will, I am firmly convinced, never permit. Such a trust will never be betrayed, such hopes can never be shattered, such a privilege 75 will never be forfeited, nor will such praises remain unuttered. Nay rather the present generation of this blessed, this repeatedly blessed, community will go from strength to strength, and will hand on, as the first century draws to a close, to the generations that must succeed it in the second the torch of Divine Guidance, undimmed by the tempestuous winds that must blow upon it, that they in turn, faithful to the wish and mandate of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, may carry that torch, with that self-same vigor, fidelity, and enthusiasm, to the darkest and remotest corners of the earth.

For the remainder of the fourth section, Shoghi Effendi quotes passages written by Bahá'u'lláh to provide encouragement, which Shoghi Effendi terms "these dynamic and typical examples of Bahá'u'lláh's sublime utterance, each having a direct bearing on the tasks which actually face or lie ahead of the American Bahá'í community, cannot fail to produce on the minds and hearts of any one of its members, who approaches them with befitting humility and detachment, such powerful reactions as to illuminate his entire being and intensify tremendously his daily exertions."

> *Quaff ye in My name, despite them that have disbelieved in God, the Lord of Revelation. We have made you to be the hands of Our Cause. Render ye victorious this Wronged One, Who hath been sore-tried in the hands of the workers of iniquity.*

...

> *By the righteousness of Mine own Self! Great, immeasurably great is this Cause! Mighty, inconceivably mighty is this Day!*

The fifth section provides some concluding remarks. Shoghi Effendi states that American Bahá'í's faithfulness to the Bahá'í Faith has potentiated the United States to establish the Most Great Peace.

> *One more word in conclusion. Among some of the most momentous and thought-provoking pronouncements ever made by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in the course of His epoch-making travels in the North American continent, are the following: "May this American Democracy be the first nation to establish the foundation of international agreement. May it be the first nation to proclaim the unity of mankind. May it be* ***the first to unfurl the Standard of the Most Great Peace.*** *" And again: "The American people are indeed worthy of being* ***the first to build the Tabernacle of the Great Peace****, and proclaim the oneness of mankind.... For America hath developed powers and capacities greater and more wonderful than other nations.... The American nation is equipped and empowered to accomplish that which will adorn the pages of history, to become the envy of*

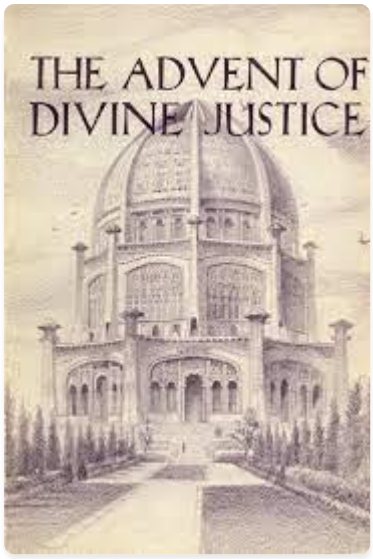
> *the world, and be blest in both the East and the West for the triumph of its people. ...The American continent gives signs and evidences of very great advancement. Its future is even more promising, for its influence and illumination are far-reaching. It will lead all nations spiritually."* ***The creative energies, mysteriously generated by the first stirrings of the embryonic World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, have, as soon as released within a nation destined to become its cradle and champion, endowed that nation with the worthiness, and invested it with the powers and capacities, and equipped it spiritually, to play the part foreshadowed in these prophetic words.*** *The potencies which this God-given mission has infused into its people are, on the one hand, beginning to be manifested through the conscious efforts and the nationwide accomplishments, in both the teaching and administrative spheres of Bahá'í activity, of the organized community of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the North American continent. These same potencies, apart from, yet collateral with these efforts and accomplishments, are, on the other hand, insensibly shaping, under the impact of the world political and economic forces, the destiny of that nation, and are influencing the lives and actions of both its government and its people. To the efforts and accomplishments of those who, aware of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, are now laboring in that continent, to their present and future course of activity, I have, in the foregoing pages sufficiently referred. A word, if the* ***destiny of the American people****, in its entirety, is to be correctly apprehended, should now be said regarding the orientation of that nation as a whole, and the trend of the affairs of its people. For* ***no matter how ignorant of the Source from which those directing energies proceed****, and however slow and laborious the process, it is becoming increasingly evident that the nation as a whole, whether through the agency of its government or otherwise, is gravitating, under the influence of forces that it can neither comprehend nor control, towards such associations and policies, wherein, as indicated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, her true destiny must lie.* ***Both the community of the American believers, who are aware of that Source, and the great mass of their countrymen, who have not as yet recognized the Hand that directs their destiny, are contributing, each in its own way, to the realization of the hopes, and the fulfillment of the promises, voiced in the above-quoted words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.***

Shoghi Effendi continues by commenting on contemporary events, lamenting America's

move away from Wilsonianism, "The ideals that fired the imagination of America's tragically unappreciated President, whose high endeavors, however much nullified by a visionless generation, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, through His own pen, acclaimed as signalizing the dawn of the Most Great Peace, though now lying in the dust, bitterly reproach a heedless generation for having so cruelly abandoned them."

With World War II imminently pending, Shoghi Effendi concludes...

> *The immediate future must, as a result of this steady, this gradual, and inevitable absorption in the manifold perplexities and problems afflicting humanity, be dark and oppressive for that nation. The world-shaking ordeal which Bahá'u'lláh, as quoted in the foregoing pages, has so graphically prophesied, may find it swept, to an unprecedented degree, into its vortex. Out of it it will probably emerge, unlike its reactions to the last world conflict, consciously determined to seize its opportunity, to bring the full weight of its influence to bear upon the gigantic problems that such an ordeal must leave in its wake, and to exorcise forever, in conjunction with its sister nations of both the East and the West, the greatest curse which, from time immemorial, has afflicted and degraded the human race.*
>
> *Then, and only then, will the American nation, molded and purified in the crucible of a common war, inured to its rigors, and disciplined by its lessons, be in a position to raise its voice in the councils of the nations, itself lay the cornerstone of a universal and enduring peace, proclaim the solidarity, the unity, and maturity of mankind, and assist in the establishment of the promised reign of righteousness on earth. Then, and only then, will the American nation, while the community of the American believers within its heart is consummating its divinely appointed mission, be able to fulfill the unspeakably glorious destiny ordained for it by the Almighty, and immortally enshrined in the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Then, and only then, will the American nation accomplish "that which will adorn the pages of history," "become the envy of the world and be blest in both the East and the West.*



Comments

December 25. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Let any one who feels the urge among the participators in this crusade ... direct in particular the attention, and win eventually the unqualified adherence, of the Negro, the Indian, the Eskimo, and Jewish races to his Faith."

Original file: 0455.html (position #33)

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attention, and win eventually the unqualified adherence, of the Negro, the Indian, the Eskimo, and Jewish races to his Faith. No more laudable and meritorious service can be rendered the Cause of God, at the present hour, than a successful effort to enhance the diversity of the members of the American Bahá'í community by swelling the ranks of the Faith through the enrolment of the members of these races. A blending of these highly differentiated elements of the human race, harmoniously interwoven into the fabric of an all-embracing Bahá'í fraternity, and assimilated through the dynamic process of a divinely-appointed Administrative Order, and contributing each its share to the enrichment and glory of Bahá'í community life, is surely an achievement the contemplation of which must warm and thrill every Bahá'í heart.

(From a letter dated 25 December 1938 written by Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, published in "The Advent of Divine Justice" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1984), p. 54)

Comments

December 26. On this date in 1953, Minoo Fozdar (son of Shirin and Khodadad Fozdar, brother of John) arrived to the Nicobar Islands, for which he was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh.

Original file: 0454.html (position #32)

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Comments

December 26. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi stated "References in the Bible to 'Mt. Paran' and 'Paraclete' refer to Muhammad's Revelation: Deuteronomy 33:2, Genesis 21:21, Numbers 12:16, Numbers 13:3. Genesis 17:20 refers to the twelve Imams and in the Revelation of St. John, chapter 11 ..."

Original file: 0453.html (position #31)

December 26. On this date in 1941, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand stated "References in the Bible to 'Mt. Paran' and 'Paraclete' refer to Muhammad's Revelation: Deuteronomy 33:2, Genesis 21:21, Numbers 12:16, Numbers 13:3. Genesis 17:20 refers to the twelve Imams

and in the Revelation of St. John, chapter 11, where it mentions two witnesses, it refers to Muhammad and Ali."

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>
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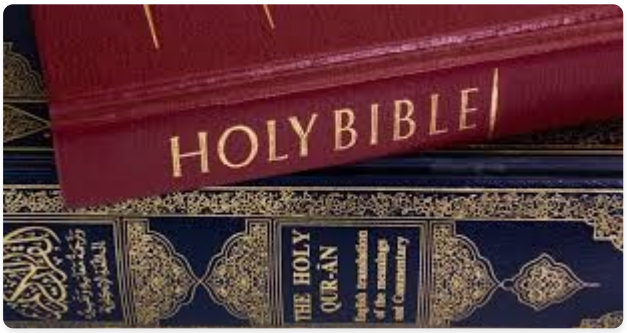
>
> *"The figures 1290 date from the declaration of Muhammad, ten years before His flight to Medina."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, December 26, 1941)*



Comments

December 26. On this date in 1901, Agnes Baldwin Alexander arrived in Hawaii to open the islands to the Bahá'í Faith.

December 26. On this date in 1901, Agnes Baldwin Alexander arrived in Hawaii to open the islands to the Bahá’í Faith. She had been born in Honolulu on July 21, 1875, to descendants of Christian missionary families, the Baldwins and the Alexanders, who were among the families of whom James A. Michener said, "They came to the islands to do good, and they did right well."

She became a Bahá’í in 1900 while visiting Italy.

She remained in Hawaii for 12 years, and of her experiences there wrote "Personal Recollections of a Bahá’í Life in the Hawaiian Islands". Upon 'Abdu’l-Baha's request, Alexander pioneered the Bahá’í Faith in Japan in 1914. In 1921 she became the first to introduce the religion to Korea. Except for extended vacations in Hawaii, Agnes spent over thirty years in Japan.

Also at the request of 'Abdu’l-Baha, Alexander became an early advocate of Esperanto and used that new international language to spread the Bahá’í teachings at meetings and conferences.

At Shoghi Effendi's request, Agnes Alexander wrote two histories: "Forty Years of the Bahá’í Cause in Hawaii: 1902-1942" and "History of the Bahá’í Faith in Japan: 1914-1938". Both of these volumes were published posthumously.

In 1957, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, appointed Agnes Alexander a Hand of the Cause of God.

In 1964, Alexander represented the Universal House of Justice, at the election of Hawaii’s

first National Spiritual Assembly, which is distinct from the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States.

After suffering a broken hip in 1965, and spending two years in a Tokyo hospital, Agnes Alexander returned home to Honolulu in 1967.

On January 1, 1971, Alexander died. She was buried behind Kawaiahao Church with her missionary forebears.

Comments

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> *Legation of the United States of America*
>
> *Teheran, Persia*
>
> *January 8, 1925*
>
> *Department of State Department of Near Eastern Affairs*
>
> *The Honorable The Secretary of State,*
>
> *Washington.*

Sir:

I have the honor to submit for the information of the Department A CONSIDERATION OF THE BAHAI RELIGION, ITS TENETS, THE CHARACTER OF ITS FOLLOWERS, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF ITS SPREAD IN PERSIA AND ELSEWHERE [also here].

A treatment of this topic at the present time appears to be particularly opportune owing to the fact that, as the Department is aware, Bahá'ísm formed the background of the Imbrie incident, and that the late Vice Consul's denunciation as a Bahá'í at the Sakha [sic] Khaneh probably resulted in his tragic death.

In discussing the matter with the Bahá'ís of Teheran, they have repeatedly stated that they consider Mr. Imbrie to have been a martyr to the cause. It is claimed that the Mohammedan clergy had prepared a list of more than one thousand Bahá'ís and designated them for massacre on the tenth day of Moharrem (August 12, 1924); and that the premature explosion of fanatical fury which resulted in the death of Mr. Imbrie relieved for the same time being the pressure upon them and doubtless saved their lives.

There is some reason to give credence to this statement of the Bahá'ís, owing to the incident with which Mr. Imbrie was connected in affording protection to Dr. Susan I. Moody, and ardent American Bahá'í, who has lived in Teheran for more than fifteen years. It appears from Dr. Moody's own story that, as a result of certain rumors which had reached her ears as to the intention of a certain fanatical group of Moslems to murder her upon July 12, she appealed to the American Voce Consul some days previously, requesting that he assure her adequate protection. Vice Consul Imbrie immediately addressed himself to the Chief of Police and requested that an ample guard be stationed in the neighborhood of Dr. Moody's house. During the night of July 12 a mob, estimated by Dr. Moody to exceed two hundred and fifty persons, gathered outside her door demanding her blood. Thanks, however, to the intervention of the police, who arrived in a flying column to her rescue, the mob was immediately dispersed and no damage was done. A significant phase of the affair was that the column was led by a prominent Bahá'í officer which doubtless accounted for its efficient action. In the succeeding days, and until the killing of Mr. Imbrie, Dr. Moody was constantly threatened in the streets, and she heard even children remark "they are going to kill Dr. Moody".

The above mentioned incident raises the question which is an exceedingly difficult one, namely, of protecting American Bahá'ís in Persia. The Department will recall the unfortunate experience in 1913 of two American Bahá'í women, Dr. Sarah A. Clock, and Miss Lillian F. Kappes, the latter being at the time the Director of the Bahá'í Girls' School in Teheran, who were cruelly beaten and robbed.

Dr. Moody, despite her advanced years, appears to be a lady of unwonted courage, and seems even to thrive under the constant threats of violence made against her by the Mohammedan masses. Instead of living in discreet seclusion in some out of the way part of town, Dr. Moody has her office on the Nasserieh, one of the principle business streets leading to the bazaar, and over the drug-store of a prominent Persian Bahá'í. In this way she has scarcely been able to draw near her windows without attracting the attention of passersby below in the street who rarely fail to brandish their fists at her and threaten her with violence. She has been living for the past years with Miss Elizabeth H. Stewart, a Bahá'í trained nurse.

The Legation was much relieved when both ladies left Teheran last November to return to the United States, ostensibly only for a visit. It is hoped however that they will decide not to return to Persia inasmuch as it is extremely difficult to guarantee them adequate protection in this fanatical country. Like many converts to a new religion, Dr. Moody is a militant champion of her adopted faith, which she preaches with the energy of a Carrie Nation.

One of the most remarkable features of Bahá'ísm in this country has been the active interest evinced in its propagation by the Bahá'ís of American. Aside from Dr. Moody's medical activities, their principal efforts have been concentrated upon the Bahá'í Girls' School founded in 1907, and which has, until very recently, always had an American woman as its head. Miss Kappes was until her death in December 1920 the director of that turbulent institution, and during the summer of 1922, Dr. G. Coy, her successor, a young women of unusual scholastic attainments and enthusiasm for the cause, arrived to carry on the work. Owing to the constant friction with the Persian authorities and obstructions placed in her way she decided last year to return to America. I am informed that the Bahá'ís are at the present time negotiating with their American co-religionists for the dispatch to Persia of Miss Coy's successor.

As was to be expected, the activity of American Bahá'ís in Persia has aroused the bitterest antagonism of the American Christian missionaries in the country who

regard the presence of their non-Christian compatriots in the country as damaging evidence to the Moslems of the lack of solidarity in the Christian world.

Before proceeding to a consideration of Bahá'ísm as such, which is the last of five purely Persian religious movements in the Persian Empire, during the period of three thousand years, it may well to refer in brief to the four preceding movements, two of which successfully invaded Europe.

From the point of view of religious inspiration, Persia remains incomparable among the nations of the ancient and modern world. Zoroaster, who was their first and greatest prophet, was born in Urumia in about 660 B.C., and founded a religion which was destined to hold undisputed sway in Persia for a thousand years and to the persist even to the present day.

About a half century before the Christian era, a modified form of Zoroastrianism called Mithraism, whose followers worshipped Mithra, the god of Light and Prosperity as well as the protector of monarchs, made its appearance in Rome where it gained a considerable following among the common people. It interesting that, for more than a century, Mithraism and Christianity were bitter rivals for the religious conquest of Europe, and that the outcome of the struggle between these two faiths was at first by no means a foregone conclusion.

The third religious movement of Persian origin, and the second to make a successful invasion of Europe, was the cult founded by Mani, whose followers were styled Manichaeans. He was born in 215 A.D., converted the contemporary Persian monarch, Shapur, and acquired a considerable following in his own country. His religion has been styled a Christianized Zoroastrianism, although its outstanding feature was its rigid asceticism which prohibited marriage in the belief that the extinction of the human race and its reabsorption into the God-head was for the best of humanity.

Manichaeism spread eastward into Tibet, where it is still practiced, and westward into southern France where its followers were the Albigenses against whom a crusade for their destruction was led by Simonde Montfort in 1209.

The fourth great movement, this time religio-communist in character, was that of Mazdak, born about the middle of the fifth century, A.D., who, during the reign of King Kobad in 487 of the Christian era, converted thousands to his doctrines. According to these, all men were born equal and had the right to maintain their

equality through life. consequently property and women should be held in common. On the more spiritual side he taught abstemiousness, devotion and the sacredness of animal life.

King Kobad who had meanwhile been converted to the new cause, finally ordered the massacre of the Mazdakites in 523 A.D. owing to a conspiracy to depose him.

The founder of the Bahá'í religion, Seyid Ali Mohammed, the son of a grocer of Shiraz, was born in that city in 1820. Owing to his early piety and intelligence he was sent to Karbela, the sacred Shia city of Iraq, to be educated where, at the age of twenty-four, he proclaimed himself to be the "Bab" or Gate, a term doubtlessly intended to convey the idea that he was the Gate to Heaven and the expression of the Divine Will on earth. He shortly thereafter proceeded to Mecca, and upon his return to Persia began to preach the new faith at Bushire, where he rapidly acquired a considerable following. His success, as in the case of Christ, immediately aroused the alarm of the orthodox clergy who set a trap for him in order to be able to accuse him of heresy. He was asked to write down a statement of his claims, which he consented to do. When it was examined it was found to be illegible, so he was immediately seized and thrown into prison.

He was conveyed a prisoner to Maku, in the province of Azerbaijan, where he remained until his transfer to Chirik near Urumia. It was there that he declared himself to be the twelfth Imam whose coming the orthodox Mohammedans are awaiting in the same fashion as do the Jews the Messiah and the Christians the Christ.

He was finally executed in Tabriz in the year 1850, and his remains were secretly borne to the Holy Land and interred on Mount Carmel.

The Bab has always been regarded by the Bahá'ís as merely a forerunner of one greater than him who was to succeed him. He is the John the Baptist of the Bahá'ís.

He was succeeded by Mirza Yahya, a youth of nineteen, known as the Subh-i-Ezel (Morning of Eternity), who was apparently nominated by the Bab to be his successor. He appears to have held unquestioned away over the faithful until 1866 when his authority was disputed by his elder brother, Baháullah (Glory of God), born in Teheran in 1817, who succeeded in deposing him and in assuming full authority as the Bab's successor. Owing to the hostility of both the Shiah and

Sunni Mohammedans, the latter was interred at Acre where he died in 1892.

Baháullah was succeeded by his son Abdul-Bahá, who was born in Teheran in 1844. During the greater part of his life he remained at Haifa in the holy Land. In 1912 however he made a tour of Europe and the United States and is said, during an address in California in October of that year, to have prophesied in the following words the outbreak of the World War within two years:

"We are on the eve of the Battle of Armageddon referred to in the sixteenth chapter of Revelations. The time is two years hence, when only a spark will set aflame the whole of Europe. The social unrest in all countries, the growing religious scepticism antecedent to the millennium, and already here, will set aflame the whole of Europe as is prophesied in the Book of Daniel and in the Book (Revelation) of John. By 1917 kingdoms will fall and cataclysms will rock the earth."

A further interesting pronouncement of Abdul-Bahá was made in November of that year in Cincinnati when he is said to have foretold in the following words that America would be the instigator of the League of Nations:

> *"America is a noble nation, a standard bearer of peace throughout the world, shedding her light to all regions. Other nations are not untrammelled [sic] and free of intrigues like the United States , and are unable to bring about Universal Peace. But America, thank God, is at peace with all the world, and is worthy of raising the flag of brotherhood and International Peace. when the summons to International Peace is raised by America, all the rest o f the world will cry: `Yes, we accept.' The nations of every clime will join in adopting the teachings of Bahaullah, revealed over fifty years ago. In His Epistles He asked the Parliaments of the world to send their best and wisest men to an international world-parliament that should decide all questions between the peoples and establish peace. then we shall have the Parliament of Man of which the prophets have dreamed."*

After the World War and the acquisition of Palestine by the British Abdul-Bahá was knighted in 1920 by the British Government and given the designation K.B.E. He passed away in 1921.

The first Bahá'í missionary to America appears to have been Arab Ebrahim Khairullah who went to the United States about thirty years ago and made numerous converts at Chicago, which has remained the center of the American Bahá'ís since that time. He was later followed by a second Bahá'í missionary named Amirza Abdul Fazl who was accompanied by Ali Kuli Khan, Nabil-ed-Dowleh. The latter is doubtless known to the State Department as the Persian Charge d'Affaires in Washington responsible for the engagement in 1911 of the Schuster financial mission.

In addition to the United States where Bahá'ís have been most successful outside of Persia there have been considerable converts in Turkestan, India, Burmah, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and France.

Owing to the persecutions to which the Bahá'ís have been subjected in Persia, it is exceedingly difficult to estimate exactly their number here. They have been forbidden moreover by Baháullah to divulge the names of their fellow-Bahá'ís. It may be well however to quote so great an authority on Persia as Lord Curzon who, in his work "Persia and the Persian Question", published in 1892, the year of Baháullah's death, states:

"The lowest estimate places the present number of Babis in Persia at half a million. I am disposed to think, from conversations with persons well qualified to judge, that the total is nearer one million. They are to be found in every walk of life, from the ministers and nobles of the Court to the scavenger or the groom, not the least arena of their activity being the Mussulman priesthood itself... If Babism continues to grow at its present rate of progression, a time may conceivably come when it will oust Mohammedanism from the field of Persia. This, I think, it would be unlikely to do, did it appear upon the ground under the flag of a hostile faith. But since its recruits are won from the best soldiers of the garrison whom it is attacking, there is greater reason to believe that it may ultimately prevail."

Bahá'ísm is an eclectic religion, which can, in my opinion, lay little claim to originality. Its universal and all-embracing character has however been of great advantage in proselytizing among the Jews, Zoroastrians, and Christians. This is expressed by Abdul-Bahá in the following words:

"It is not necessary to lower Abraham to raise Jesus. It is not necessary to lower Jesus to proclaim Baháullah. We must welcome the Truth of God wherever we behold it. The essence of the question is that all these great Messengers came to

raise the Divine Standard of Perfections. All of them shine as orbs in the same heaven of the Divine Will. All of them give Light to the world."

The Bahá'ís have always contested the claim that their religion is primarily an oriental one and adapted only to the needs of Eastern peoples. In refutation of this opinion, Abdul-Bahá stated:

"As to the meaning of the cause of Baháullah, whatever has to do with the universal good is divine, and whatever is divine is for the universal good. If it be true, it is for all; if not, it is for no one; therefore a divine cause of universal good cannot be limited to either the East or the West, for the radiance of the Sun of Truth illumines both the East and the West, and it makes its heat felt in the South and in the North - there is no difference between one Pole and another. At the time of the Manifestation of Christ, the Romans a nd Greeks thought His Cause was especially was especially for the Jews. they thought they had a perfect civilization and nothing to learn from Christ's teachings, and by this false supposition many were deprived of His Grace. Likewise know that the principles of Christianity and the Commandments of Baháullah are identical and that their paths are the same.

Every day there is progress; there was a time when this divine institution (of progressive revelation) was in embryo, then new-born, then a child, then an intellectual youth;'

There is in Bahá'ísm a striking resemblance to Christian Science in the attitude of its adherents towards evil which they claim to be non-existent.

While there would appear to be little that is new in Bahá'ísm, it adheres to certain principles that have a ring of progress and modernity unknown to unreformed Islam. *These outstanding features are that:*

> *a. It is a religion of tolerance; Abdul-Bahá has said that "any religion which is not the cause of love and unity is no religion";*
>
> *b. It advocates the complete emancipation and equality of women;*
>
> *c. It espouses the cause of a universal language and calendar;*
>
> *d. It advocates the establishment of a League of Nations, the realization of*

which was forecaste [sic] as early as 1875. Of the character of such a League, the Baháullah has to say:

"In such a universal treaty the limits of the borders and boundaries of every state should be fixed, and the customs and laws of every government; all the agreements and affaires of state and arrangements between the various governments should be propounded and settled in due form; the size of the armaments for each government should likewise be definitely agreed upon, because if in the case of any state there were to be an increase in the preparation for war, it would be a cause for alarm to the other states. The basis of this powerful alliance should be so fixed that, if one of the states afterwards broke any of the articles of it, the rest of the nations of the world would rise up and reduce it to submission. Yea, the whole human race would band its forces together to overthrow that government."

e. It has preached the limitation of armaments in the following words of Abdul-Bahá:

"By a general agreement all the governments of the world must disarm simultaneously. It will not do if one lays down its arms and the others refuse to do so. The nations of the world must concur with each other concerning this supremely important subject, so that they may abandon together the deadly weapons of human slaughter. As long as one nation increases her military and naval budget other nations will be forced into this crazed competition through their natural and supposed interests."

f. Though advocating non-resistance, it has consistently justified righteous warfare, of which Abdul-Bahá writes as follows:

"Even war is sometimes the great foundation of peace, and destroying is the cause of rebuilding. this war may be essentially attuned to the melodies of peace; and then verily this fury is kindness itself, this oppression is the essence of justice and this war is the source of reconciliation. Today, the true duty of a powerful king is to promote universal peace; for verily this signifies the freedom of all the people of the world."

g. Finally, in discussing the struggle between capital and labor, Abdul-Bahá has advocated profit-sharing with the employees in order to prevent wasteful strikes and lockouts. With regard to the latter, while in Dublin, New

Hampshire, in 1912, he spoke as follows:

"Now I want to tell you about the law of God. According to the divine law, employees should not be merely paid by wages. Nay, rather they should be partners in every work. The question of socialization is very difficult. It will not be solved by strikes for wages. All the governments of the world must be united, and organize an assembly, the members of which shall be elected from the parliaments and the noble ones of the nations. these must plan with wisdom and power, so that neither the capitalists suffer enormous losses nor the labourers become needy. In the utmost moderation they should make the law, then announce to the public that the rights of the working people are to be effectively preserved; also the rights of the capitalists are to be protected, when such a general law is adopted, by the will of both sides, should a strike occur, all the governments of the world should collectively resist it. Otherwise the work will lead to much destruction, especially in Europe. Terrible things will take place. One of the several causes of a universal European war will be this question. The owners of properties, mines and factories, should share their incomes with their employees, a nd give a fairly certain percentage of their profits to their working-men, in order that the employees should receive, besides their wages, some of the general income of the factory, so that the employee may strive with his soul in the work."

During the reign of Mozaffer-ed-Din, Baháullah prophesied in the following words the establishment of a Persian republic:

"Soon affairs will be changed in thee, and a republic of men shall rule over thee."

These words proved to be an effective weapon against the republican movement of 1924, and the accusation that the entire plan was a Bahá'í conspiracy was frequently heard. This led to a denouncement of Sardar Sepah as a Bahá'í and to the secret publication of a falsified photograph of him wearing the portrait and insignia of Baháullah. Realizing the danger of such propaganda among the fanatic populace, the Prime Minister instigated the Shiah clergy of Karbela and Nejaf to present him with a portrait of the Imam Ali, as reported in the Legation's despatch No. 815 of December 26, 1924.

I have been informed by prominent Bahá'ís in Teheran that the Prime Minister secretly cherishes a high regard for the cause, but that, owing to political considerations, he dares not express himself. It is said that at the time when he was a simple Cossack on duty at the Roshanee hospital, a Bahá'í institution, he was greatly impressed by the kindliness and humanitarianism of the Bahá'í attendants which he has never forgotten.

Be that as it may, the fact is that he has permitted Bahá'í officers of unquestionable ability to rise to high rank in the army.

The outstanding of these are:

> *Colonel Shoa-ed-Din Khan Alai, Chief of Accounts, Ministry of War.*
>
> *Colonel Ataollah Khan Alai, recently returned to Teheran from France where he was sent with the delegation of Persian officers sent to Saint Cyr.*
>
> *Major Rahmatollah Khan Alai, Inspector.*
>
> *Major Rouhollah Khan, Special Adjutant to the War Minister.*

Owing to the fact that Bahá'ísm is a proscribed religion in this officially Islamic state, no professed Bahá'í can be a deputy in Parliament or act as a member of the Cabinet. The most prominent Bahá'ís moreover are inclined to adhere to the admonition of Baháullah that they withdraw entirely from political activity. Owing to the high moral qualities and ethical standards of the Bahá'ís in contrast with the orthodox Mohammedans, this withdrawal from public life is greatly to be regretted. ***Among the leading Bahá'ís outside the army are:***

> *Nabil-ed-Dowleh, Ali Kuli Khan, and Madam Moraveh-os-Saltaneh (an American).*
>
> *Ezzatollah Khan Alai, Department of Accounts, Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs.*
>
> *Valiollah Khan Vargha, First Drogman, Turkish Embassy*

> *Azizollah Khan Vargha, farmer.*
>
> *Hass an Khan Ahiai, Imperial Bank of Persia. The Bahá'ís, who had placed great hopes in the former religious liberalism of the Prime Minister, have now lost all faith in him as a reformer. Since the collapse of the republican movement his defection from their cause has been complete, and he has left no stone unturned in order to integratiate [sic] himself with the corrupt Orthodox clergy. A recent evidence of this was his ostentatious visit to the holy shrines of Iraq after his campaign in Arabistan and his visit to the shrine of Sh'Abdul Azim outside Teheran before entering the city.*

Even to the casual student of Islam it is obvious that Mohammedanism is in hopeless decay, more hopeless than was Catholicism before the Reformation. *If it is to be saved at all, there must arise an oriental reformer who will denounce the Islamic `indulgences' as did Luther the Papal ones.*

The disinterest of Bahá'ís, though in origin a Moslem sect, in the reform of Allah's faithful is a somewhat discouraging omen. Their striving for an all-expansive universality, though comprehensible, has so diluted their force in Persia as to diminish greatly their beneficent influence. One is constrained to remark that if they had concentrated less on Europe and America and more on morally bankrupt Persia their efforts would be more praiseworthy.

On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that Islam, a Semitic religion that has never been adapted to Aryan needs as has Judaism through the teachings of Christ, has always remained a misfit on this light-hearted, imaginative Aryan people, who, to escape the yoke of the Caliphate, created that absurd schism called Shiism.

Failing therefore the ideal remedy for Persia's present religious decadence, namely a national renaissance of their great historic religion Zoroastrianism, ***Bahá'ísm, in which there are signs of a Protestant Reformation, and which after all is of purely Persian origin, may prove itself to be the best solution under the circumstances.***

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

> *(signed) W. Smith Murray*

Comments

6_umer: .

December 26. On this date in 1926, Howard MacNutt, a Disciple of 'Abdu’l-Bahá, died. In 1912, as commanded by 'Abdu’l-Bahá, he repented before a group of New York Bahá’ís for violating the Covenant when he failed "to break all communication with Ibrahim Kheiralla and other Covenant-breakers."

Original file: 0450.html (position #28)

December 26. On this date in 1926, Howard MacNutt, a Disciple of 'Abdu’l-Bahá, died. On November 18, 1912, as commanded by 'Abdu’l-Bahá, Howard MacNutt, repented before a group of New York Bahá’ís. MacNutt had violated the Covenant when he failed "to break all communication with Ibrahim Kheiralla and other Covenant-breakers."

> *Theologically liberal, Howard MacNutt had an extremely high regard for the*

ability of persons to fulfil their own potential, to the extent of becoming like Christ in one's spiritual abilities. One consequence was a belief that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had no extraordinary spiritual station; according to Charles Mason Remey, MacNutt did not "regard Him as being different in Spirit from other men. . . that through works and service and overcoming all He attained to this station." His view contrasted sharply with that of most Bahá'ís, and caused the Washington, D.C. Bahá'ís to cease inviting MacNutt to speak at their meetings, about 1906. It resulted in a severe personality clash with Arthur P. Dodge *(q. v.), who viewed 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the return of Christ. It also resulted in MacNutt failing to appreciate the Bahá'í teaching that Covenant-breaking is a spiritual disease. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá came to the United States in 1912 He assigned to MacNutt the task of meeting with a group of potential Covenant-breakers in Chicago and warning them.* ***He also ordered MacNutt to break all communication with Ibrahim Kheiralla and other Covenant-breakers. When MacNutt failed to cut his connections with the Covenant-breakers and failed to warn the Chicago group of their actions, 'Abdu'l-Bahá warned Howard MacNutt that he had violated the Covenant himself and commanded him to repent before a group of New York Bahá'ís, which he did on 18 November 1912. But the matter was not resolved; 'Abdu'l-Bahá cabled Ali Kuli Khan on 16 April 1913, "Macnutt repented from violation of covenant but was not awakened." After several months' correspondence between MacNutt and 'Abdu'l-Bahá via Ali Kuli Khan, MacNutt satisfied 'Abdu'l-Bahá that he had come to understand and repent for his earlier errors, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá recognized MacNutt as a Bahá'í.***

Comments

December 26. On this date in 2006, the Bahá’í World News Service reported on the Universal House of Justice's letter "to the Bahá’ís of Egypt" concerning their ability "to obtain officially issued identification cards."

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> *Message to the Baha'is of Egypt from the Universal House of Justice 26 December 2006*
>
> *HAIFA, Israel — The Universal House of Justice, the highest governing body of the Baha'i Faith, has addressed a message to the Baha'is of Egypt in the wake of a 16 December Supreme Administrative Court decision in Cairo that upheld a discriminatory government policy regarding the Baha'is and their identification cards. The policy places the Baha'is in the untenable position of either having to make a false statement about their religious beliefs or give up their state identification cards. The cards are essential to accessing most rights of citizenship,*

> *including education, financial services, and even medical care.*

On December 21, 2006, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter "to the Bahá'ís of Egypt" concerning their ability "to obtain officially issued identification cards."

> *The Universal House of Justice 21 December 2006*
>
> *To the Bahá'ís of Egypt*
>
> *Dearly loved Friends,*
>
> *We have received the distressing news that on 16 December, the Supreme Administrative Court in Cairo ruled against the decision of a lower court that permitted Bahá'ís to obtain officially issued identification cards. We wholly sympathize in your disappointment that justice was not served by a ruling that robs the members of your community of so critical a right of Egyptian citizens owing only to your beliefs. But you must stand firm and persevere in your effort to win affirmation of this right. To do less would be to deprive the authorities in Egypt of the opportunity to correct a wrong which has implications for many others, no less than for yourselves. Moreover, to relent would be to disregard the moral courage of those organizations, media, and persons of goodwill who have joined their voices to yours in the quest for a just solution to a serious inequity.*
>
> *In explaining the court's decision to the press, the presiding judge stated that the Egyptian constitution recognizes only three religions: Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. This argument misses the essence, obscures the issue. Surely you are not asking here for the Bahá'í Faith to be recognized. Like other Egyptian citizens, you simply wish to be free to carry out the requirement of the civil law that you must obtain identification cards without making a false statement about your religious beliefs. Possessing such a card is a common right to which every native-born Egyptian is entitled. But how strange it is that the custodians of the law would themselves oblige you to violate a government policy that all citizens without exception are expected to observe! It is, of course, worthy of praise that the judges so publicly upheld the validity of three of the divine religions. As a community that believes that all God's chosen Messengers are "seated upon the same throne, uttering the same speech, and proclaiming the same Faith", the Bahá'ís of Egypt have no difficulty embracing the truths of the three religions mentioned. But to*

what purpose were their names invoked? Was it to justify the exclusion of certain citizens from exercising their civil rights? Would this not amount to a misuse of the authority of these Faiths to perpetrate an injustice that offends the high standard of justice to which they hold their adherents? But your interest is not in a theological tug-of-war with the Egyptian judiciary, despite its gross misrepresentation of the Bahá'í Faith: it is in the application of the principles of equity, fairness, and honesty that are so vital to those of all faiths and no faith. The ruling was unreasonable not only because it is contrary to prescriptions set forth in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Egypt is a signatory, but more especially because the sacred scriptures of Islam extol tolerance as a precept of social stability.

This incident calls to mind the occasion more than eight decades ago when Egyptian judicial and ecclesiastical authorities considered the claims of our Faith, not in a sympathetic effort but with the intent to oppose. A case involving three Muslim men who had become Bahá'ís in a village prompted their interest. As a result, the appellate religious court of Beba delivered a verdict on 10 May 1925 that denounced the Bahá'í Faith and annulled the marriages of these men. Nevertheless, from the judges' scrupulous study of Bahá'í scriptures, they arrived at the accurate conclusion that the Bahá'í Faith was "a new religion", "entirely independent", with "beliefs, principles and laws" of its own. This verdict was sanctioned at the time by Egypt's highest ecclesiastical authorities. If Egyptian magistrates were capable then of such clear perception, and others in a local court have so recently shown a similar awareness, it seems reasonable to trust that this capacity will in the future reassert itself positively at the highest level of authority in your country.

Well beyond a century ago, during the lifetime of Bahá'u'lláh, His Faith took root in your homeland. Despite instances of opposition, it flourished in a climate of intellectual ferment. As early as 1934 your National Spiritual Assembly was incorporated, thus assuming a legal personality that enabled it to function according to Bahá'í procedures and to hold properties, including a National Center and a cemetery. Then suddenly in 1960, without forewarning, Presidential Decree no. 263 was issued, banning your national and local institutions and confiscating your properties and other assets. For nearly five decades now the members of your community have been subjected to humiliation of all kinds, including the harassment of police surveillance and false arrests. Until now no evidence has been adduced to prove that you have been unworthy of the public's trust, while there is

much to confirm that you made noteworthy contributions towards fostering the spiritual, intellectual, and cultural character of the Egyptian people. In this regard, we recall with deep emotion and pride the distinguished services to your country and community of your late Bahá'í compatriot Hussein Bikar, who, despite having received a presidential award honoring his outstanding achievements as an artist, was denied an Egyptian identification card up until the time of his death.

This is no time, however, to dwell on a litany of the vexations your community has for so long sustained. It is, rather, an appropriate occasion for reflection on the broad context in which the recent action of the Supreme Administrative Court occurred, that from it you may derive an ever-larger sense of meaning and purpose.

Injustice is rife. Throughout the world it afflicts every department of life whether in the home, at the workplace, or in the public sphere as a consequence of the ill conduct of individuals, groups, or governments. Lamenting the horrors it breeds, Bahá'u'lláh made this poignant remark: "Justice is, in this day, bewailing its plight, and Equity groaneth beneath the yoke of oppression. The thick clouds of tyranny have darkened the face of the earth, and enveloped its peoples." So grave a situation exists at a time of unprecedented change: opposite processes of chaos and of order interact in a spiral of turbulence that signals a transition in the spiritual and social agenda of the world as a whole.

Human society has arrived at a stage in its evolution when unity of the whole human race is imperative. To not appreciate this reality is to not grasp the meaning of the current crisis in world affairs. The principle of the oneness of humankind identifies the code for resolving the far-reaching issues involved. As Bahá'ís, you understand that this principle implies not only the ultimate peaceful goal that it signifies but involves, as well, your participation in the painful tasks entailed in attaining it. Hence, you appreciate the global connotations of instances of oppression at home or abroad and accept the responsibility of striving, guided by the principles of the Faith and in collaboration with others whenever possible, to combat injustice, for the common good.

Those groups supporting you in your current encounter are of a world-embracing vision and are themselves prepared to withstand the harsh resistance to their selfless occupation, sustaining blows of injustice in the process. As the rise of justice ensures the appearance of unity in the world, all who take on the formidable challenges of struggling for it have indeed captured the spirit of the age epitomized

> *in the principle of oneness. To the extent that the fight for justice contributes to the establishment of a single global standard of human rights, the organizations in Egypt so engaged are working towards achieving the unification of their nation's peoples. They are thus committing themselves in large measure to the vital task of reconciling the tensions that bedevil their society and delay the attainment of its unity. Such reconciliation should not be impossible to Egypt's people, who can take pride in the celebrated enlightenment that in a glorious past ensured their unity in a flourishing society. Undoubtedly, Egypt will rise to participate, as befits its stature, in the fruition of that destiny of world peace and prosperity of which all nations dream.*
>
> *Be assured of our ardent prayers in the Holy Shrines on behalf of each and every one of the members of your community and for the progress of all your compatriots in that land of ancient splendor.*
>
> *[signed: The Universal House of Justice]*

Comments

December 27. On this date in 1985, the Universal House of Justice asked "Who can doubt that we are now entering a period of unprecedented and unimaginable developments in the onward march of the Faith?"

December 27. On this date in 1985, the Universal House of Justice asked "Who can doubt that we are now entering a period of unprecedented and unimaginable developments in the onward march of the Faith? ... We know that the present victories will lead to active opposition, for which the Bahá'í world community must be prepared. We know the prime needs of the Cause at the moment: a vast expansion of its numbers and financial resources; a greater consolidation of its community life and the authority of its institutions; an observable increase in those characteristics of loving unity, stability of family life, freedom from prejudice and rectitude of conduct which must distinguish the Bahá'ís from the spiritually lost and wayward multitudes around them. Surely the time cannot be long delayed when we must deal universally with that entry by troops foretold by the Master as a prelude to mass conversion."

> *"Who can doubt that we are now entering a period of unprecedented and unimaginable developments in the onward march of the Faith? ... We know that*

> *the present victories will lead to active opposition, for which the Bahá'í world community must be prepared. We know the prime needs of the Cause at the moment: a vast expansion of its numbers and financial resources; a greater consolidation of its community life and the authority of its institutions; an observable increase in those characteristics of loving unity, stability of family life, freedom from prejudice and rectitude of conduct which must distinguish the Bahá'ís from the spiritually lost and wayward multitudes around them. Surely the time cannot be long delayed when we must deal universally with that entry by troops foretold by the Master as a prelude to mass conversion. (27 December 1985, Universal House of Justice. In Messages from the Universal House of Justice 1963-1986, p. 703; and Seven Year Plan, p. 444) [36]*

Comments

December 27. On this date in 2008, one of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Original file: 0447.html (position #25)

December 27. On this date in 2008, one of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Universal House of Justice member Peter Khan would later give a talk on July 3, 2009, later published as "Reflections on the Ridvan 2009 Message," stating,

> *As you are, I am sure, aware, that series of conferences had a galvanizing effect on the Bahá'í Community throughout the world and ultimately on the larger society. It was a tangible demonstration of the global spread of the Faith and it created a most welcome surge toward the goal of 1500 Intensive Programs of Growth by the end of the present plan.*

How does membership in the International Teaching Centre lead to election to the Universal House of Justice?

How is it that with its nine members elected every five years from the male membership in good standing of the worldwide Bahá'í community by an electoral college consisting of all

the members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly throughout the world, the membership of the Universal House of Justice consists exclusively of men who have previously been appointed to the International Teaching Centre by the Universal House of Justice?

With no overt campaigning or politicking permitted, upon what does the electoral college base its election of new members to the Universal House of Justice?

In the Bahá'í electoral system, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. Members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice.

Consider the cases of Stephen Birkland and Stephen Hall. Stephen Birkland was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2008 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010. Stephen Hall was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2005 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010.

In a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

In that period, Stephen Birkland attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 1-2, 2008	Lusaka, Zambia
November 8-9, 2008	Johannesburg, South Africa
November 29-30, 2008	Antofagasta, Chile
December 6-7, 2008	Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America
January 17-18, 2009	Vancouver, Canada
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
February 21-22, 2009	Accra, Ghana

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Birkland"

In that period, Stephen Hall attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 15-16, 2008	Bangui, Central African Republic
November 22-23, 2008	Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo
November 29-30, 2008	Yaoundé, Cameroon
December 6-7, 2008	Portland, Oregon, United States of America
December 13-14, 2008	Stamford, Connecticut, United States of America
January 3-4, 2009	Abidjan, Ivory Coast
January 17-18, 2009	Lae, Papua New Guinea
January 24-25, 2009	Sydney, Australia
January 31-February 1, 2009	Auckland, New Zealand
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Hall"

No other Bahá'ís receive as much exposure to electors of the Universal House of Justice as do members of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual

election to the Universal House of Justice.

When the Universal House of Justice appoints members to the International Teaching Centre, they are in fact selecting their own replacements.

In the Bahá'í electoral system, with no overt campaigning and politicking permitted, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. The nine members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice. In fact, every single one of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

To illustrate further, in a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

Each of the 41 Regional Conferences was attended by two Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre with the exception of the Conference held at Uvira, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which had only one representative. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre at the time of the Regional Conferences were Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, Stephen Birkland, Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker.

Of this cohort of Counsellors, the five lady members (Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker) were ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice.

Of the four male members at the time of the 41 Regional Conferences (Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, and Stephen Birkland), all have been elected to the Universal House of Justice.

In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. In the people's democracies of the Eastern Bloc, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

The next member elected to the Universal House of Justice will be Andrej Donoval, who is the longest tenured male member of the International Teaching Centre, having been appointed to that body in 2013.

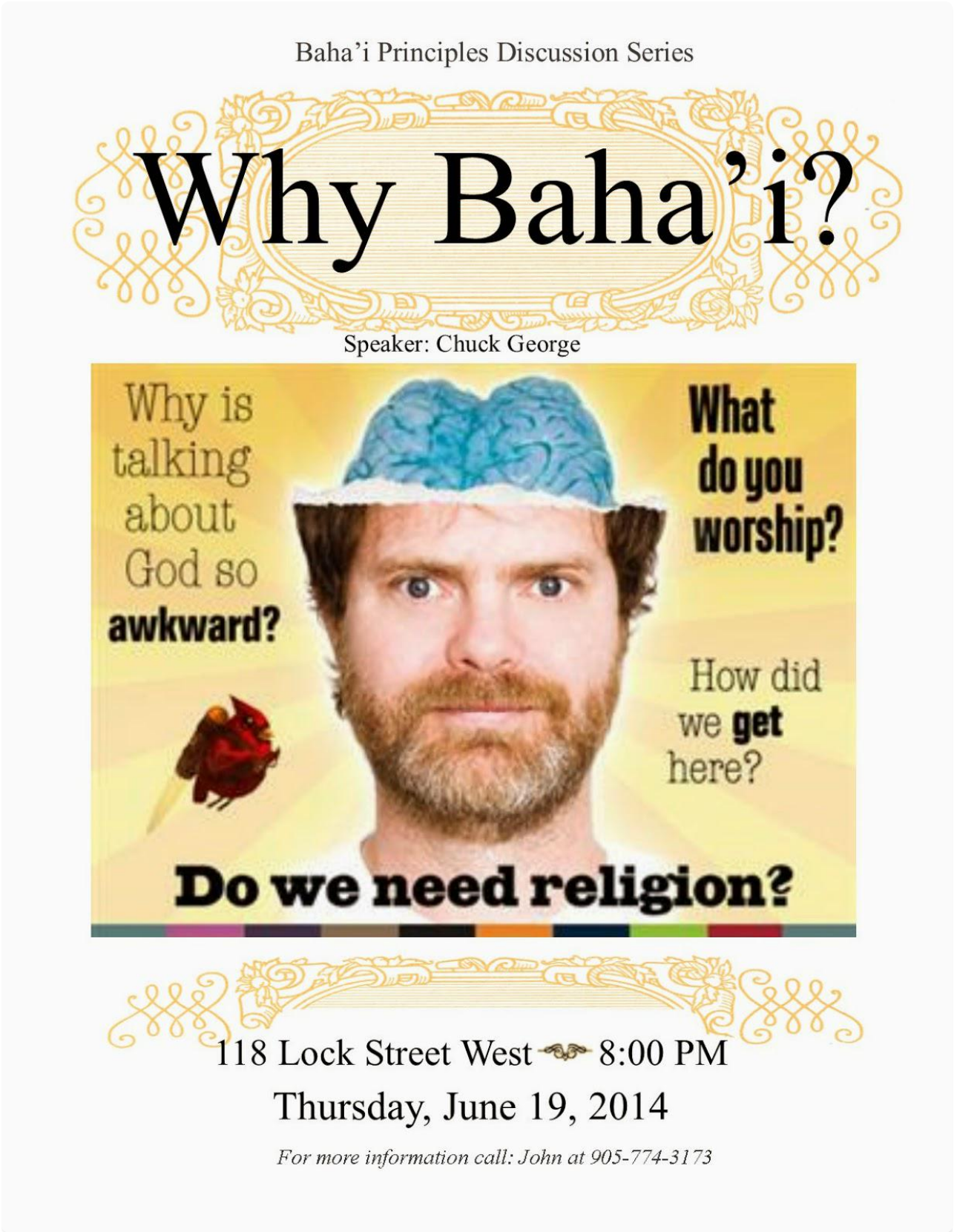
Comments

December 27. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The principle of the fireside meeting, which was established in order to permit and encourage the individual to teach in his own home, has been proven the most effective instrument for spreading the Faith..."

December 27. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The principle of the fireside meeting, which was established in order to permit and encourage the individual to teach in his own home, has been proven the most effective instrument for spreading the Faith..."

> *1987. The Guardian feels that the most effective way for the Bahá'ís to teach the Faith is to make strong friends with their neighbours and associates. When the friends have confidence in the Bahá'ís and the Bahá'ís in their friends, they should give the Message and teach the Cause. Individual teaching of this type is more effective than any other type.*

> *The principle of the fireside meeting, which was established in order to permit and encourage the individual to teach in his own home, has been proven the most effective instrument for spreading the Faith....*
>
> *(From a letter dated 27 December 1954 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)*


Baha'i Principles Discussion Series
Why Baha'i?
Speaker: Chuck George
Why is talking about God so awkward?
What do you worship?
How did we get here?
Do we need religion?
118 Lock Street West 8:00 PM
Thursday, June 19, 2014
For more information call: John at 905-774-3173

Comments

December 27. On this date in 1909, Charles Mason Remey and Howard C. Struven, the first Bahá'ís to make a complete circuit of the world, reached Tokyo. Mason Remey would later become a Hand of the Cause, the president of the International Bahá'í Council, and a claimant to the office of Guardian.

Original file: 0445.html (position #23)

December 27. On this date in 1909, Charles Mason Remey and Howard C. Struven, the first Bahá'ís to make a complete circuit of the world, reached Tokyo. Mason Remey would later become a Hand of the Cause, the president of the International Bahá'í Council, and after Shoghi Effendi's death, a claimant to the office of Guardian.

Comments

December 27. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of India giving reasons as to why the Kitab-i-Aqdas is not circulated amongst all the Bahá'ís or translated into their native languages.

Original file: 0444.html (position #22)

December 27. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of India giving reasons as to why the Kitab-i-Aqdas is not circulated amongst all the Bahá'ís or translated into their native languages.

27 Reasons for Delay in Translating and Publishing the Kitab-i-Aqdas 6 DECEMBER 1965

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

We have received a number of inquiries as to the translation and publication of the Kitab-i-Aqdas from friends who are unable to read it in its original form. We feel the following extract from a letter written on behalf of the beloved Guardian by his secretary dated December 27, 1941, addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma clarifies this question:

The reason it [the Kitab-i-Aqdas] is not circulated amongst all the

27.1a Bahá'ís is, first, because the Cause is not yet ready or sufficiently matured to put all the provisions of the Aqdas into effect and, second, because it is a book which requires to be supplemented by detailed explanations and to be translated into other languages by a competent body of experts.

27.2 The provisions of the Aqdas are gradually, according to the progress of the Cause, being put into effect already, both in the East and the West

As is well known, the beloved Guardian has already given in God Passes By, pp. 24-15, a summary of the contents of this Most Holy Book, and included the codification of all the laws of the Kitab-i-Aqdas as one of the objectives of the Ten Year Crusade. It is the intention of the Universal House of Justice to achieve this objective by publishing a synopsis and codification of these laws during the current Nine Year Plan. Much of the Kitab-i-Aqdas has already been translated by the beloved

27.3 Guardian and has been given to the friends in the West, although not designated, in every case, as coming from the Most Holy Book., We give you below a list of such references for your guidance:

Gleanings from the Writings Sections XXXVII, LVI, LXX, of Bahá'u'lláh =I, XCVIII, CV, CIV, CLIX, and CLXV The Promised Day Is Come pp. 26 (1st para.), 36-37 (until the end Of 2nd para.), 40 (2nd para.), and 84-85 (until the end of 1st para.)

27-I. In 1973, the last year of the Nine Year Plan, the Universal House of Justice published A Synopsis and Codification of the Kitab-i-Aqdas. The volume includes all of the extracts in the list of references that follows. The Bahá'í World Center published a copiously annotated English translation of the Kitab-i-Aqdas and related texts in 1992.

+68

The Challenging Requirements pp. 16-17 of the Present Hour 2 (until the end of 1st para.) Bahá'í Administration p. 21 (1st para.) The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh P. 134 (2nd para.) The Bahá'í Community (1963 edition) P. 4 (2nd & 3rd paras) Star of the West, Vol. XIV Pp. 112-14

27.4 The two reasons given by the Guardian in the extract of the letter quoted above need further amplification:

27.4a I. As regards the first reason, regarding the timeliness of putting into effect all the provisions of the Kitab-i-Aqdas, it must be borne in mind that the beloved Guardian

further stated:

... the Laws revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in the Aqdas are, whenever practicable and not in direct conflict with the Civil Law of the land, absolutely binding on every believer or Bahá'í institution whether in the East or in the West. Certain laws, such as fasting, obligatory prayers, the consent of the parents before marriage, avoidance of alcoholic drinks, monogamy, should be regarded by all believers as universally and vitally applicable at the present time. Others have been formulated in anticipation of a state of society destined to emerge from the chaotic conditions that prevail today. When the Aqdas is published this matter will be further explained and elucidated. What has not been formulated in the Aqdas, in addition to matters of detail and of secondary importance arising out of the application of the Laws already formulated by Bahá'u'lláh, will have to be enacted by the Universal House of Justice.... (Bahá'í News, October 1935)

The Guardian has further written:

It should be noted in this connection that this Administrative Order is fundamentally different from anything that any Prophet has previously established, inasmuch as Bahá'u'lláh has Himself revealed its principles, established its institutions, appointed the person to interpret His Word and conferred the necessary authority on the body designed to supplement and apply His legislative ordinances. Therein lies the secret of its strength, its fundamental distinction, and the guarantee against disintegration and schism. . . . (The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 145)

27-2. This message of Shoghi Effendi was later published in CF, pp. 4-38; the passage from the Kit6b-i-Aqdas appears on pp. 18-19 (see also PB, p. 63).

+69

1. As to the second reason given by the beloved Guardian in the extract referred to above, it must be noted that the supplementary material to go with the publication of the laws of the Kitab-i-Aqdas may well include the following items, all of which require careful research and translation:

a. The Annex to the Kitab-i-Aqdas, the Questions and Answers. (God Passes By, p. 219)

b. Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh in "elaboration and elucidation of some of the laws He [Bahá'u'lláh] had already laid down." (God Passes By, p. 216)

c. Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh establishing 'subsidiary ordinances designed to supplement the

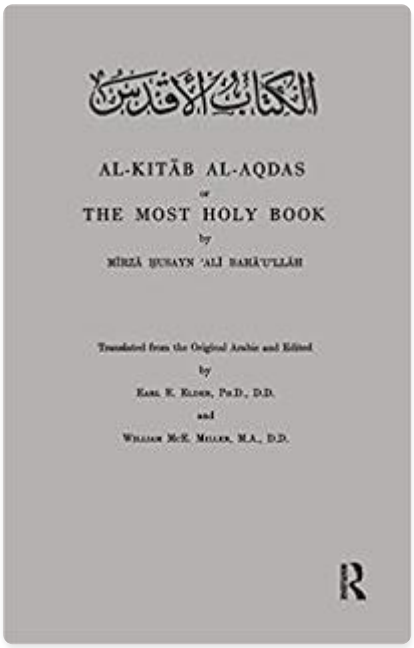
provisions of His Most Holy Book." (God Passes By, p. 216)

d. The Letters and Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi in interpretation of the laws and ordinances of the Kitab-i-Aqdas.

e. Other explanations and footnotes that may be required in elucidation of the provisions of that Book.

We hope the foregoing will clarify the matter for the friends 27.5

With loving Bahá'í greetings, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE



Comments

December 27. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of India "The Bab said that whenever 'He Whom God will make manifest' appears, accept Him. He never said don't accept Him until after the lapse of 1000 years....His Dispensation in a sense will last as long as Bahá'u'lláh's lasts."

Original file: 0443.html (position #21)

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> *1540. Duration of the Bab's Dispensation*

> *"The Bab said that whenever 'He Whom God will make manifest' appears, accept Him. He never said don't accept Him until after the lapse of 1000 years. Also Bahá'u'lláh says that in the year 9 of the Babi Dispensation the time was ripe for the Revelation of 'He Whom God will make manifest.' As the Bab was not only a Manifestation but a Herald of this Bahá'í Faith, the interval between His revelation and that of Bahá'u'lláh was of shorter duration. His Dispensation in a sense will last as long as Bahá'u'lláh's lasts."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of India, December 27, 1941: Dawn of a New Day, p. 94)*

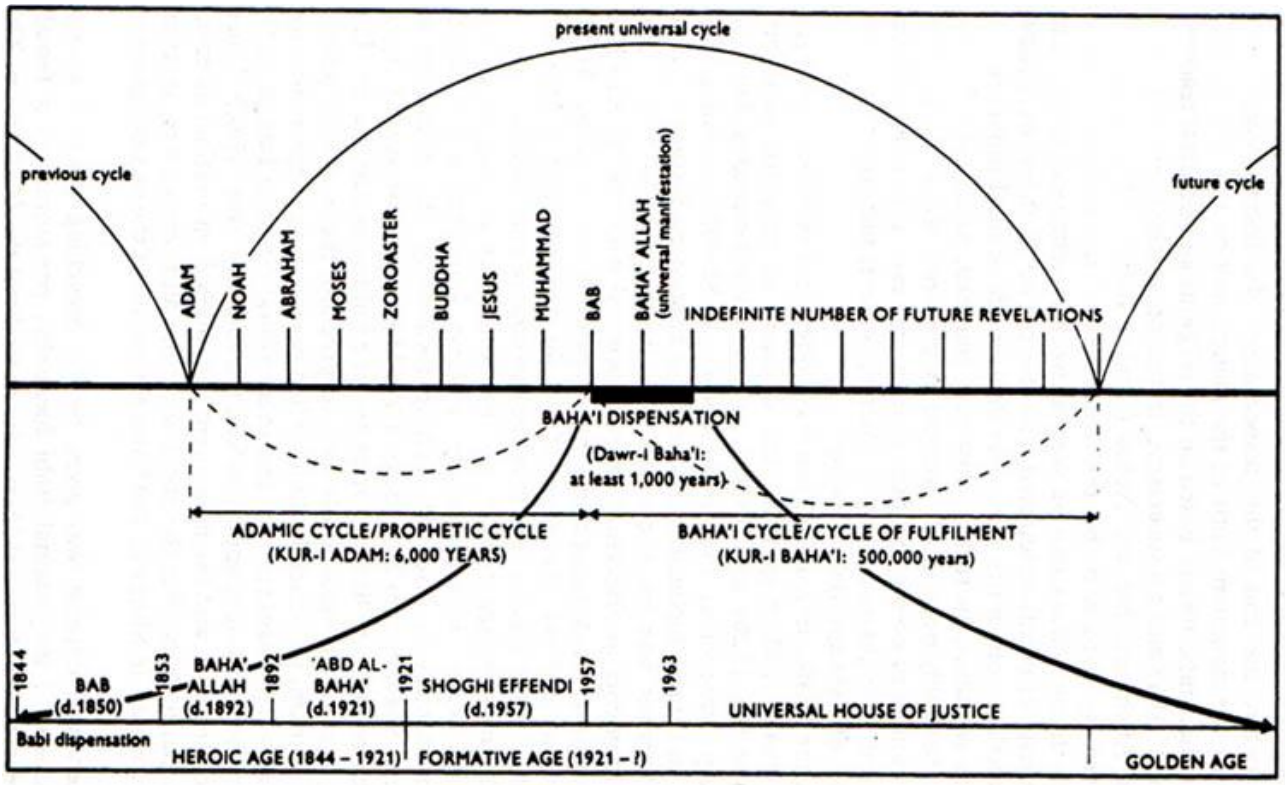

Figure 16.1 *The Baha'i view of history*

Comments

December 27. On this date in 1874, Mountfort Mills was born. A wealthy attorney, he served on the Bahá'í Temple Unity and the NSA of the US and Canada and represented the Faith in some important legal cases. He assisted 'Abdu'l-Baha during his time in New York City.

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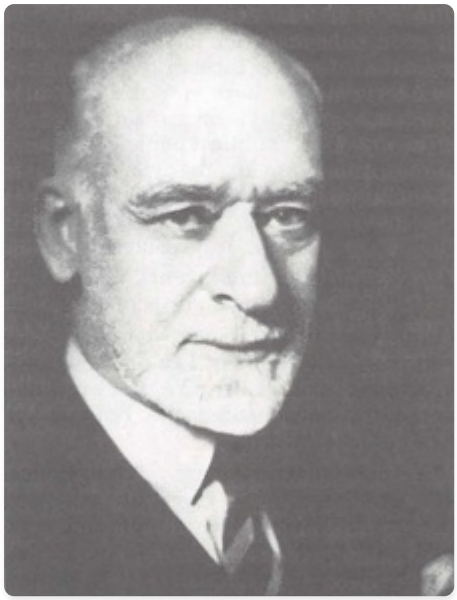

Comments

December 28. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Every inquirer has to be approached from his own angle. Those who are essentially of the mystic type should first be given those teachings of the Cause which emphasize the nature and value of spiritual realities; while those who are ..."

Original file: 0441.html (position #19)

December 28. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote " ...the upper classes ... need the right type of people to approach them... Every inquirer has to be approached from his own angle. Those who are essentially of the mystic type should first be given those teachings of the Cause which emphasize the nature and value of spiritual realities; while those who are practically minded and of a positive type are naturally more ready and inclined to accept the social aspect of the Teachings."

1946. ...the upper classes ... need the right type of people to approach them, and a method that can suit their mentality. Our teaching methods should allow a certain degree of elasticity in establishing contacts with various types of individual seekers. Every inquirer has to be approached from his own angle. Those who are essentially of the mystic type should first be given those teachings of the Cause which emphasize the nature and value of spiritual realities; while those who are practically minded and of a positive type are naturally more ready and inclined to accept the social aspect of the Teachings. But of course, gradually the entire Message, in all its aspects and with the full implications it entails, should be explained to the newcomer. For to be a believer means to accept the Cause in its wholeness, and not to adhere to some of its teachings.

However, as already stated, this ought to be done gradually and tactfully. For conversion is after all a slow process.

(From a letter dated 28 December 1936 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)

Comments

December 28. On this date in 1911, Hugh Chance, who served on the Universal House of Justice for 30 years from its inaugural election in 1963 until his retirement from that body in 1993, was born.

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In 1951, Shoghi Effendi, as Guardian, appointed members to the International Bahá'í Council, naming Mason Remey as the Council's President and describing it as an embryonic international House of Justice.

When Shoghi Effendi died in 1957 without having appointed a successor Guardian, as confirmed by a "Unanimous Proclamation of the 27 Hands of the Cause of God", the Hands of the Cause of God elected from among their own nine individuals who would serve as Custodians to help lead the transition of the International Bahá'í Council, into the Universal House of Justice.

In 1961 the International Bahá'í Council was changed to an elected body, with members of all National Spiritual Assemblies voting.

In 1963, the first Universal House of Justice was elected, and its members are elected every five years by members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly in the world. In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. New members are currently generally elected from the appointed institutions of the Bahá'í administration, particularly the International Teaching Centre. In fact, all of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as members of the International Teaching Centre. In council democracies, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

With the eventual passing of the individual Hands of the Cause of God appointed by Shoghi Effendi and without a Guardian to appoint additional Hands, the Universal House of Justice saw the need for developing an institution for the purpose of performing the Hands' function of protection and propagation of the Faith.

In 1968 the Continental Board of Counselors was formed. The Counselors appoint Auxiliaries collectively referred to as Auxiliary Boards in smaller regional areas, who in turn appoint their own Assistants to work in localities. Auxiliary Board Members for Protection are charged with watching over the security of the Bahá'í Faith, and Auxiliary Board Members for Propagation are responsible for working with the grassroots on the global Plans established by the Universal House of Justice. Originally, members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed by and served under the Hands of the Cause of God who directed their efforts worldwide. The first members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed in 1954, and they were divided into five distinct geographical regions

In 1973 the administrative branch called the Institution of the Counselors was formed. Also in 1973, the International Teaching Centre was first formed by the Universal House of Justice, and originally consisted of the 17 Hands of the Cause still living at that time, plus three Counsellor members. The number of Counsellor members was raised to four in 1979, to seven in 1983, and finally to the current nine in 1988. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre are appointed by the Universal House of Justice to five-year terms that begin shortly after the International Convention and election of the Universal House of Justice.

Comments

December 28. On this date in 2005, the Bahá'í World News Service reported on the quinquennial meeting of the Continental Boards of Counsellors in Haifa.

Original file: 0439.html (position #17)

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> *Counsellors meet to discuss plans*
>
> *28 December 2005*
>
> *HAIFA, Israel — Pictured at the Baha'i World Centre are members of the Continental Boards of Counsellors together with members of the Universal House of Justice, the International Teaching Centre, and, at front, centre, the Hand of the Cause of God Dr Ali-Muhammad Varqa.*
>
> *The Continental Boards of Counsellors, an institution charged with promoting the propagation and protection of the Baha'i Faith, meet in Haifa every five years to discuss development plans for the worldwide Baha'i community.*
>
> *There are 81 Counsellors worldwide. The conference (December 27 - 31) is being followed by five days of meetings of the individual boards from the various*

> *continents.*

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Comments

December 28. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi made some observations about the history of the early Church and the role of the Protestant Reformation, stating that "the primacy of Peter and his right to succession after Jesus have been established by the latter, though only orally and not ..."

Original file: 0438.html (position #16)

December 28. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi made some observations about the history of the early Church and the role of the Protestant Reformation. He stated that "the primacy of Peter and his right to succession after Jesus have been established by the latter, though only orally and not in an explicit and definite language. The real reason why Christ did not make some explicit statement regarding His succession is not known, and cannot be known." "The Reformation was a right challenge to the man-made organization of the Church, and as such was a step in advance. In its origins, it was a reflection of the new spirit

which Islam had released, and a God-sent punishment to those who had refused to embrace its truth."

> *542. History of the Early Church*
>
> *"...There is certainly an element of truth at the basis of the organization of the Christian Church. For instance, the primacy of Peter and his right to succession after Jesus have been established by the latter, though only orally and not in an explicit and definite language. The real reason why Christ did not make some explicit statement regarding His succession is not known, and cannot be known. For how can we, poor humans, claim to unravel the mysteries of God's mind and purpose, and to grasp the inscrutable dispensations of His providence. The utmost we can do is to give some explanations, but these must necessarily fail to give the fundamental reason to the problem we seek to solve."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 28, 1936)*
>
> *1653. The Reformation Was a Challenge to Man-Made Organization of the Church*
>
> *"What contribution the Reformation did really make was to seriously challenge, and partly undermine, the edifice which the Fathers of the Church had themselves reared, and to discard and demonstrate the purely human origin of the elaborate doctrines, ceremonies and institutions which they had devised. The Reformation was a right challenge to the man-made organization of the Church, and as such was a step in advance. In its origins, it was a reflection of the new spirit which Islam had released, and a God-sent punishment to those who had refused to embrace its truth."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, December 28, 1936)*

Comments

December 28. On this date in 1999, the Universal House of Justice announced to the Baha'i world that all elements of the laws dealing with obligatory prayer and fasting in the Kitab-i-Aqdas were henceforth applicable to all believers, including those in the West.

Original file: 0437.html (position #15)

December 28. On this date in 1999, the Universal House of Justice announced to the Baha'i world that all elements of the laws dealing with obligatory prayer and fasting in the Kitab-i-Aqdas were henceforth applicable to all believers, including those in the West.

> *The Universal House of Justice*
>
> *28 December 1999*
>
> *To the Bahá'ís of the World*

Beloved Friends,

In the course of the Four Year Plan, we have been reviewing those laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas which are not yet universally applied, in order to determine which of them it would be timely to implement now.

In every land we see a growing thirst for spiritual life and moral clarity. There is recognition of the ineffectiveness of plans and programs for human betterment which are not rooted in lives of spiritual awareness and ethical virtue. Who should be better equipped to satisfy this longing than those who are already inspired by the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and aided by His Power?

We have determined, therefore, that it is imperative for all the believers to deepen their awareness of the blessings conferred by the laws which directly foster the devotional life of the individual and, thus, of the community. The essentials of these laws are known to all Bahá'ís, but acquiring greater insight into their significance must include carrying out all the divinely revealed aspects of their observance. These are the laws which pertain to obligatory prayer, fasting and recitation of the Greatest Name ninety-five times a day.

Bahá'u'lláh asserts: "One who performeth neither good deeds nor acts of worship is like unto a tree which beareth no fruit, and an action which leaveth no trace. Whosoever experienceth the holy ecstasy of worship will refuse to barter such an act or any praise of God for all that existeth in the world. Fasting and obligatory prayer are as two wings to man's life. Blessed be the one who soareth with their aid in the heaven of the love of God, the Lord of all worlds."

The friends have long been familiar with the great importance which Bahá'u'lláh attaches to daily obligatory prayer and to the observance of the fast, but a number of aspects of the law, such as those concerning ablutions, traveling and the compensation for prayers missed, remained to be made universally applicable. This step is now taken. Thus all elements of the laws dealing with obligatory prayer and fasting are, without any exception, now applicable.

We have also decided that it is timely for Bahá'ís in every land to take to their hearts the words of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas: "It hath been ordained that every believer in God, the Lord of Judgment, shall, each day, having washed his hands and then his face, seat himself and, turning unto God, repeat 'Alláh-u-Abhá' ninety-five times. Such was the decree of the Maker of the Heavens when, with majesty and

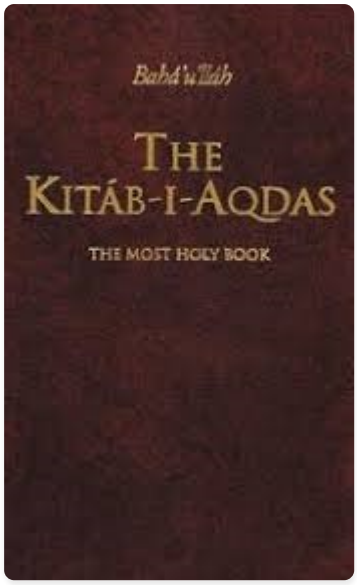
power, He established Himself upon the thrones of His Names." Let all experience the spiritual enrichment brought to their souls by this simple act of worshipful meditation.

The spiritual growth generated by individual devotions is reinforced by loving association among the friends in every locality, by worship as a community and by service to the Faith and to one's fellow human beings. These communal aspects of the godly life relate to the law of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár which appears in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Although the time has not come for the building of local Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs, the holding of regular meetings for worship open to all and the involvement of Bahá'í communities in projects of humanitarian service are expressions of this element of Bahá'í life and a further step in the implementation of the Law of God.

Bahá'u'lláh has written: "We have adorned the heaven of utterance with the stars of divine wisdom and holy ordinances as a bounty on Our part. Verily, We are the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous. O friends of God throughout the regions! Know ye the value of these days and cling unto whatsoever hath been sent down from God, the Most Great, the Most Exalted. Verily, He remembereth you in the Most Great Prison, and instructeth you in that which will cause you to draw nigh unto a station that delighteth the eyes of the pure in heart. Glory rest upon you and upon those who have attained unto that living fountain which floweth forth from My wondrous Pen."

It is our prayer at the Sacred Threshold that the greater attention to the spiritual heart of the Teachings which these laws express will enhance the devotion of the friends to the Source of all bounties and attract to the Cause the receptive souls among His spiritually famished children.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]



Comments

December 28. On this date in 1980, the Universal House of Justice wrote the National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand in response to a letter from a spiritual assembly in New Zealand "posing questions which have arisen as a result of reading the book 'When We Grow Up' by Bahíyyih Nakhjavani."

Original file: 0436.html (position #14)

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> *To the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of New Zealand*

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 16 October 1980 enclosing a letter from the Spiritual assembly of ... posing questions which have arisen as a result of reading the book When We Grow Up by Bahíyyih Nakhjavani, and it has instructed us to convey the following.

The House of Justice suggests that all statements in the Holy Writings concerning specific areas of the relationship between men and women should be considered in the light of the general principle of equality between the sexes that has been authoritatively and repeatedly enunciated in the Sacred Texts. In one of His Tablets 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts: "In this divine age the bounties of God have encompassed the world of women. Equality of men and women, except in some negligible instances, has been fully and categorically announced. Distinctions have been utterly removed." That men and women differ from one another in certain characteristics and functions is an inescapable fact of nature; the important thing is that 'Abdu'l-Bahá regards such inequalities as remain as being "negligible."

The relationship between husband and wife must be viewed in the context of the Bahá'í ideal of family life. Bahá'u'lláh came to bring unity to the world, and a fundamental unity is that of the family. Therefore, one must believe that the Faith is intended to strengthen the family, not weaken it, and one of the keys to the strengthening of unity is loving consultation. The atmosphere within a Bahá'í family as within the community as a whole should express "the keynote of the Cause of God" which, the beloved Guardian has stated, "is not dictatorial authority, but humble fellowship, not arbitrary power, but the spirit of frank and loving consultation."

A family, however, is a very special type of "community." The Research Department has not come across any statements which specifically name the father as responsible for the "security, progress and unity of the family: as is stated in Bahíyyih Nakhjavani's book, but it can be inferred from a number of the responsibilities placed on him, that the father can be regarded as the "head" of the family. The members of the family all have duties and responsibilities towards one another and to the family as a whole, and these duties and responsibilities vary from member to member because of their natural relationships. The parents have the inescapable duty to educate the children--but not vice versa; the children have the duty to obey their parents--the parents do not obey the children; the mother--not the father--bears the children, nurses them in babyhood, and is thus their first

educator; hence daughters have a prior right to education over sons and, as the Guardian's secretary has written on his behalf, "The task of bringing up a Bahá'í child, as emphasized time and again in Bahá'í Writings, is the chief responsibility of the mother, whose unique privilege is indeed to create in her home such conditions as would be the most conducive to both his material and spiritual welfare and advancement. The training which a child first receives through his mother constitutes the strongest foundation for his future development..." A corollary of this responsibility of the mother is her right to be supported by her husband--a husband has no explicit right to be supported by his wife. This principle of the husband's responsibility to provide for and protect the family can be seen applied also in the law of intestacy which provides that the family's dwelling place passes, on the father's death, not to his widow, but to his eldest son; the son at the same time has the responsibility to care for his mother.

It is in this context of mutual and complementary duties, and responsibilities that one should read the Tablet in which 'Abdu'l-Bahá gives the following exhortation:

> *O Handmaids of the All-Sufficing God!*
>
> *Exert yourselves, that haply ye may be enabled to acquire such virtues as shall honor and distinguish you amongst all women. Of a surety, there is no greater pride and glory for a woman than to be a handmaid in God's Court of Grandeur; and the qualities that shall merit her this station are an alert and wakeful heart; a firm conviction of the unity of God, the Peerless; a heartfelt love for all His maidservants; spotless purity and chastity; obedience to and consideration for her husband; attention to the education and nurturing of her children; composure, calmness, dignity and self-possession; diligence in praising God, and worshipping Him both night and day; constancy and firmness in His holy Covenant; and the utmost ardor, enthusiasm, and attachment to His Cause....*

This exhortation to the utmost degree of spirituality and self-abnegation should not be read as a legal definition giving the husband absolute authority over his wife, for, in a letter written to an individual believer on 22 July 1943, the Beloved Guardian's secretary wrote on his behalf:

> *The Guardian, in his remarks...about parents" and children's, wives" and husbands" relations in America, meant that there is a tendency in that country for children to be too independent of the wishes of their parents and lacking in the respect due to them. Also wives, in some cases, have a tendency to exert an unjust degree of domination over their husbands, which, of course, is not right, any more than that the husband should unjustly dominate his wife.*

In any group, however loving the consultation, there are nevertheless points on which, from time to time, agreement cannot be reached. In a Spiritual Assembly this dilemma is resolved by a majority vote. There can, however, be no majority where only two parties are involved, as in the case of a husband and wife. There are, therefore, times when a wife should defer to her husband, and times when a husband should defer to his wife, but neither should ever unjustly dominate the other. In short, the relationship between husband and wife should be as held forth in the prayer revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá which is often read at Bahá'í weddings: "Verily, they are married in obedience to Thy command. Cause them to become the signs of harmony and unity until the end of time."

These are all relationships within the family, but there is a much wider sphere of relationships between men and women than in the home, and this too we should consider in the context of Bahá'í society, not in that of past or present social norms. For example, although the mother is the first educator of the child, and the most important formative influence in his development, the father also has the responsibility of educating his children, and this responsibility is so weighty that Bahá'u'lláh has stated that a father who fails to exercise it forfeits his rights of fatherhood. Similarly, although the primary responsibility for supporting the family financially is placed upon the husband, this does not by any means imply that the place of woman is confined to the home. On the contrary, 'Abdu'l-Bahá has stated:

> *In the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, women are advancing side by side with men. There is no area or instance where they will lag behind: they have equal rights with men, and will enter, in the future, into all branches of the administration of society. Such will be their elevation that, in every area of endeavor, they will occupy the highest levels in the human world....*

And again:

> *So it will come to pass that when women participate fully and equally in the affairs of the world, when they enter confidently and capably the great arena of laws and politics, war will cease;...*
>
> *(The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 135)*

In the Table of the World, Bahá'u'lláh Himself has envisaged that women as well as men would be breadwinners in stating:

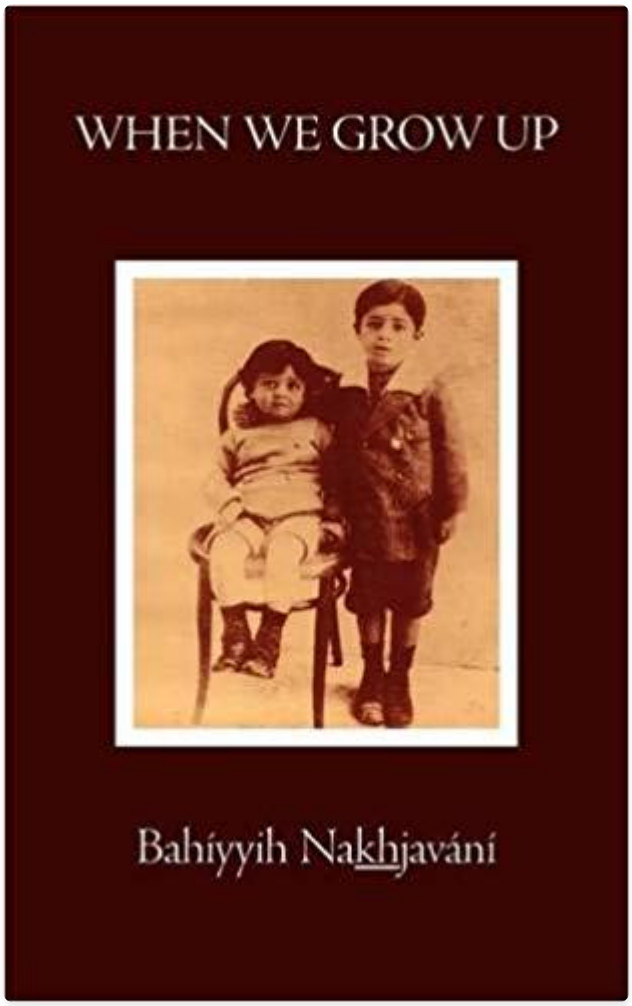
> *Everyone, whether man or woman, should hand over to a trusted person a portion of what he or she earneth through trade, agriculture or other occupation, for the training and education of children, to be spent for this purpose with the knowledge of the Trustees of the House of Justice.*
>
> *(Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-I-Aqdas, p. 90)*

A very important element in the attainment of such equality is Bahá'u'lláh's provision that boys and girls must follow essentially the same curriculum in schools.

It is hoped that the above explanations and comments will help the Local Spiritual Assembly of ... to resolve the questions set forth in its letter.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT



Comments

December 29. On this day in 2015 the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counselors outlining the Third Five Year Plan of the Second Epoch of the Formative Age of the Bahá'í Era.

Original file: 0435.html (position #13)

December 29. On this day in 2015 the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counselors outlining the Third Five Year Plan of the Second Epoch of the Formative Age of the Bahá'í Era.

> *The Universal House of Justice*
>
> *29 December 2015*
>
> *To the Conference of the* Conference of the Continental Boards of Counselors
>
> *Dearly loved Friends,*
>
> *The* Plan *upon which the Bahá'í world embarked nearly five years ago is in its*

closing stages; the final tally of its accomplishments grows still, but will soon be sealed. The collective effort it inspired has called for wholehearted reliance on those powers with which a benevolent Lord has endowed His loved ones. Gathered with you at this moment of reflection, we are conscious of a determination among the friends to bring the current Plan to a fitting conclusion, and of an eagerness to advance further along the path that experience has marked out.

The considerable distance already travelled along that path is evident from the present Plan's most striking outcomes. The ambitious goal of raising to 5,000 the number of clusters where a programme of growth, at whatever level of intensity, is under way looks set to be achieved in the months that remain before Riḍván 2016. In many scores of clusters, there are over a thousand inhabitants—sometimes several thousand—taking part in a well-established pattern of activity that embraces ever-larger numbers, raising communities whose habits of thought and action are rooted in Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. Worldwide, half a million individuals have now been enabled to complete at least the first book in the sequence of courses, an extraordinary feat that has laid a sure foundation for the system of human resource development. A generation of youth is being galvanized into action by a compelling vision of how they can contribute to building a new world. Marvelling at what they have seen, leaders of society in certain places are pressing the Bahá'ís to make their programmes for educating the young widely available. Faced with increasing complexity, Bahá'í institutions and their agencies are finding ways to organize the activities of rising numbers of friends by promoting collaboration and mutual support. And the capacity for learning, which represented such a priceless legacy of previous Plans, is being extended beyond the realm of expansion and consolidation to encompass other areas of Bahá'í endeavour, notably social action and participation in the prevalent discourses of society. We see a community fortified with the gifts of strength and hard-won experience that come from two decades of unremitting effort focused on a common aim: a significant advance in the process of entry by troops.

That this process must go much further, there can be no doubt; nevertheless, developments demonstrate that a significant advance has already occurred. It has prepared the friends of God for a more exacting test of their capabilities, one that will also make great demands of your institution as you rally them to meet its requirements. In this coming Plan, which will conclude at the threshold of the second century of the Formative Age of the Faith, we will call the believers

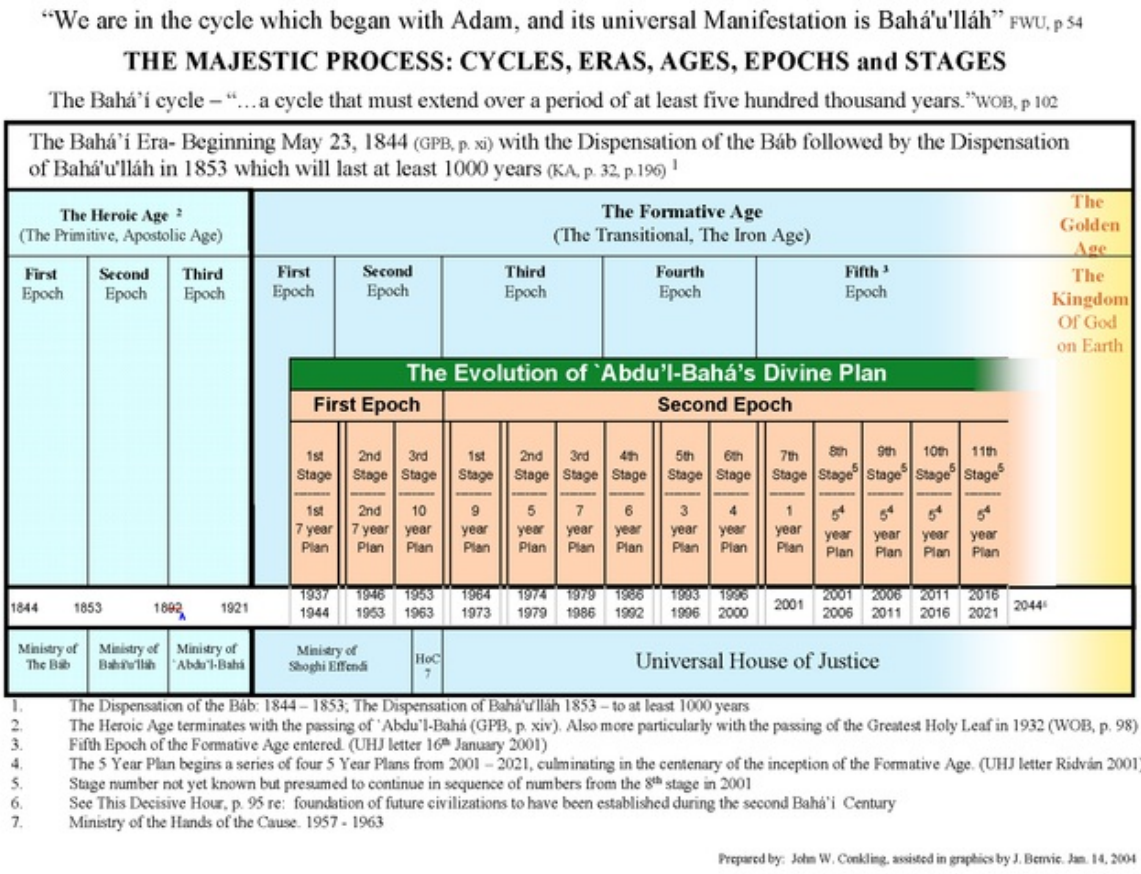
everywhere to the immense exertion necessary to bring to fruition the seeds that have been so lovingly and assiduously sown and watered in the five Plans that preceded it.

The emergence of a programme of growth

The unfoldment of the process of growth in a cluster, while naturally possessing unique features in every instance shaped by the receptivity of those who are exposed to the divine teachings, conforms to certain shared characteristics. Many of these were discussed in our message to your 2010 conference, in which reference was made to a series of milestones that mark progress along a path of development. A collective understanding of what is required for the friends in a cluster to pass the first of the milestones we described, and then the second, has grown over this period.

In the Five Year Plan now ending, the task facing the believers has been to apply all that had been learned from previous Plans to the work of extending the process of growth to thousands of new clusters. What this has shown is that much depends on the ability of the institutions to draw on help from friends in other clusters, reinforcing the actions of an existing Bahá'í community by, for example, arranging the support of visiting teaching teams or tutors. In many places, the institute process begins with the assistance of believers from stronger neighbouring communities who find creative ways of reaching out to the local population, youth in particular, and supporting them as they start to engage in service. Efforts to stimulate activity in a cluster, especially one that has not yet been opened to the Faith, are greatly enhanced if one or more individuals settle there as homefront pioneers, concentrating their attention on part of a village or even a single street where there is heightened receptivity. Well over 4,500 believers have already arisen to serve in this way during the present Plan, an astonishing accomplishment.

Whatever the combination of strategies used, the chief aim is to initiate a process for building capacity within the cluster through which its inhabitants, prompted by a wish to contribute to the spiritual and material well-being of their communities, are enabled to begin offering acts of service. Once this fundamental requirement is met, a programme of growth has emerged. Essential, of course, is the support of Auxiliary Board members and their assistants, whose close involvement from the first stirrings of activity helps the friends to maintain a clear and united vision of what is needed.


"We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh" FWU, p 54
THE MAJESTIC PROCESS: CYCLES, ERAS, AGES, EPOCHS and STAGES
The Bahá'í cycle – "…a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years." WOB, p 102
The Bahá'í Era- Beginning May 23, 1844 (GPB, p. xi) with the Dispensation of the Báb followed by the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh in 1853 which will last at least 1000 years (KA, p. 32, p.196) 1
The Heroic Age 2 (The Primitive, Apostolic Age)
The Formative Age (The Transitional, The Iron Age)
The Golden Age
First Epoch
Second Epoch
Third Epoch
First Epoch
Second Epoch
Third Epoch
Fourth Epoch
Fifth 3 Epoch
The Kingdom Of God on Earth
The Evolution of `Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan
First Epoch
Second Epoch
1st Stage 1st 7 year Plan
2nd Stage 2nd 7 year Plan
3rd Stage 10 year Plan
1st Stage 9 year Plan
2nd Stage 5 year Plan
3rd Stage 7 year Plan
4th Stage 6 year Plan
5th Stage 3 year Plan
6th Stage 4 year Plan
7th Stage 1 year Plan
8th Stage5 54 year Plan
9th Stage5 54 year Plan
10th Stage5 54 year Plan
11th Stage5 54 year Plan
1844
1853
1892
1921
1937 1944
1946 1953
1953 1963
1964 1973
1974 1979
1979 1986
1986 1992
1993 1996
1996 2000
2001
2001 2006
2006 2011
2011 2016
2016 2021
2044 6
Ministry of The Báb
Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh
Ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
Ministry of Shoghi Effendi
HoC 7
Universal House of Justice
1. The Dispensation of the Báb: 1844 – 1853; The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh 1853 – to at least 1000 years
2. The Heroic Age terminates with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (GPB, p. xiv). Also more particularly with the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1932 (WOB, p. 98)
3. Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age entered. (UHJ letter 16th January 2001)
4. The 5 Year Plan begins a series of four 5 Year Plans from 2001 – 2021, culminating in the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age. (UHJ letter Ridván 2001)
5. Stage number not yet known but presumed to continue in sequence of numbers from the 8th stage in 2001
6. See This Decisive Hour, p. 95 re: foundation of future civilizations to have been established during the second Bahá'í Century
7. Ministry of the Hands of the Cause. 1957 - 1963
Prepared by: John W. Conkling, assisted in graphics by J. Bernie. Jan. 14, 2004

Comments

Anonymous: [removed]

A35821363: The impulse to learn through action is, of course, present among the friends from the very start. The introduction of quarterlycycles of activitycapitalizes on this emerging capacity and allows it to be steadily reinforced. Although this capacity is specifically associated with the reflection and planning phase of acycle, especially the reflection gathering that regulates its pulsating heartbeat, it also comes to be exercised at all other points of thecycleby those pursuing related lines of action. We note that, as learning accelerates, the friends grow more capable of overcoming setbacks, whether small or large—diagnosing their root causes, exploring the underlying principles, bringing to bear relevant experience, identifying remedial steps, and assessing progress, until theprocess of growthhas been fully reinvigorated.Central to the pattern of action evolving in aclusteris

the individual and collective transformation effected through the agency of the Word of God. Fromthe beginning of the sequence of courses, a participant encounters Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation in considering such weighty themes as worship, service to humanity, the life of the soul, and theeducation of childrenandyouth. As a person cultivates the habit of study and deep reflection upon the Creative Word, this process of transformation reveals itself in an ability to express one's understanding of profound concepts and to explore spiritual reality in conversations of significance. These capacities are visible not only in the elevated discussions that increasingly characterize interactions within the community, but in the ongoing conversations that reach well beyond—not least between theBahá'í youthand their peers—extending to include parents whose daughters and sons are benefiting from the community'sprogrammesof education. Through exchanges of this kind, consciousness of spiritual forces is raised, apparent dichotomies yield to unexpected insights, a sense of unity and common calling is fortified, confidence that a better world can be created is strengthened, and a commitment to action becomes manifest. Such distinctive conversations gradually attract ever-larger numbers to take part in a range of community activities. Themes of faith and certitude surface naturally, prompted by the receptivity and experiences of those involved. What is clear, then, is that as theinstitute processin aclustergains momentum, the act of teaching comes to assume greater prominence in the lives of the friends.As progress continues, the rising capacity for meaningful conversation is harnessed in the plans of the institutions. By the timecyclesof activity have formally emerged, this capacity is being further stimulated through theexpansion phasethat does so much to determine the outcome of eachcycle. The precise objectives of eachexpansion phasevary, of course, depending on conditions in theclusterand the circumstances of the Bahá'í community. In some instances, its main aim is to increase participation in thecore activities; in others, readiness to enrol in the Faith is discovered. Conversations about the Person of Bahá'u'lláh and the purpose of His mission occur in a variety of settings, includingfiresidesandvisits to homes. The actions undertaken during this phase allow abilities developed through studying the relevantinstitute materialsto be exercised and refined.As experience grows, the friends become more adept at discerning when they have found a hearing ear, at deciding when to be more direct in sharing the message, at removing obstacles to understanding, and at helping seekers to embrace the Cause.The approach of working in teams allows the friends to serve together, offer mutual support, and build confidence—but even when carrying out actions individually, they are coordinating their efforts to greater effect. Their focus and investment of time endow this short but decisive phase of thecyclewith the intensity it demands. This spirit of high resolve serves to multiply the community's powers, and in eachcyclethe friends learn to depend more and more on the potent confirmations from the divine realm that their actions

attract.Five years ago, most of theclusterswhere anintensive programme of growthhad been established were those where a reasonable number of Bahá'ís already lived, often geographically spread out. Efforts on the part of those believers to advance the work by inviting the participation of friends, co-workers, extended family, and acquaintances did much to raise the level of activity throughout thecluster. Indeed, widening the circle of participation in this way has become a familiar aspect of Bahá'í life and remains essential. At the same time, experience indicates that, for growth to accelerate through a steady flow of new participants entering theinstitute process, more is required. The pattern of community life has to be developed in places where receptivity wells up, those small centres of population where intense activity can be sustained. It is here, when carrying out the work of community building within such a narrow compass, that the interlocking dimensions of community life are most coherently expressed, here that the process of collective transformation is most keenly felt—here that, in time, the society-building power inherent in the Faith becomes most visible.

A35821363: Therefore, a significant task facing you and yourauxiliariesat the outset of the comingPlanwill be to assist the friends everywhere to appreciate that, for existingprogrammes of growthto continue to gain strength, the strategy of initiating community-building activities in neighbourhoods and villages that show promise must be widely adopted and systematically followed. Individuals serving in such areas learn how to explain the purpose of thoseactivities, how to demonstrate through deeds thepurity of their motives, how to nurture environments where the hesitant can be reassured, how to help the inhabitants see the rich possibilities created by working together, and how to encourage them to arise to serve the best interests of their society. Yet, recognizing the real value of this work should also increase awareness of its delicate character. An emerging pattern of action in a small area can easily be smothered by too much outside attention; accordingly, the number of friends who move to such locations or visit them frequently need not be great since, after all, the process being set in motion is essentially one that depends on the residents themselves. What is required from those involved, however, is long-term commitment and a yearning to become so familiar with the reality of a place that they integrate into local life and, eschewing any trace of prejudice or paternalism, form those bonds of true friendship that befit companions on a spiritual journey. The dynamic that develops in such settings creates a strong sense of collective will and movement. Over time, theclusteras a whole and its centres of intense activity will infuse one another with the heightened understanding that comes from efforts to apply the teachings in different contexts.As the friends in a cluster continue to reinforce and expand thecommunity-building activitiestaking shape around them, it becomes evident that distinctive progress has been made. All the elements of a system necessary for growth to be sustained are now

in place. Reaching thesecond milestonealong the continuum of development, whichwe described to you five years ago, is accompanied by advances qualitative, but also quantitative—such as a rise in the number of those involved in conversations that enable receptivity to be discovered and nurtured, in how manyhomes are being visited, incore activitiesand participation, in how many individuals are beginning thesequence of coursesor supporting others as they gain the confidence to serve. Attendance at gatherings to mark theNineteen Day FeastandBahá'í Holy Daysis being fostered by Local Spiritual Assemblies. Such advances are the more visible signs of a much finer development: the gradual spread, within a population, of a pattern of community life based on Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. And, naturally, the number of believers grows.In the last five years, the path that leads to the emergence of anintensive programme of growthhas become more readily discernible. It must be earnestly pursued. In thePlanthat will commence thisRiḍván, we are calling forgrowthto be accelerated in allclusterswhere it has begun. Notwithstanding the natural ebb and flow characteristic of an organic process, there should appear a clear arc of progress over the course of twentycycles. This combined effort should seek to raise the number ofclusterswhere aprogramme of growth has become intensiveto 5,000 by Riḍván 2021.We set this objective before the Bahá'í world conscious that it is truly formidable;that a herculean labour will be required; that many sacrifices will have to be made. But faced with the plight of a world that suffers more each day bereft of Bahá'u'lláh's elixir, we cannot, in conscience, ask anything less of His devoted followers.God willing, their exertions will prove worthy to crown a hundred years of toil and set the stage for exploits as yet unimagined that must adorn the second century of theFormative Age.In the coming months, you will be initiating consultations with National Spiritual Assemblies to assess with them the implications that this global goal holds for their respective communities, aprocess of consultationwhich has to be quickly extended until it reaches the grassroots. Action must then ensue. We anticipate that progress will be more swiftly achieved in regions where one or moreintensive programmes of growthhave been sustained for some time, as these offer a valuable source of knowledge and experience and represent a reservoir of human resources as efforts are made to strengthen surrounding areas. Pursuit of this goal will also result in the emergence of newprogrammes of growth, often in unopenedclustersthat neighbour those where a significant advance has occurred. Such a flow of assistance finds its origin in the imperatives laid out in theTablets of the Divine Plan.

Anonymous: [removed]

Anonymous: [removed]

Anonymous: [removed]

A35821363: Releasing the potential of the youthThe marvellous exploits of theyouthin the field of service are one of the finest fruits of the presentPlan. If any proof were needed of the extraordinary potential that theyouthpossess, it has been incontrovertibly delivered. In the wake of theyouth conferences convened in 2013, the surge of energy which was imparted to the work being carried out inclustersdemonstrates clearly how the community of the Greatest Name is able to give shape to the highest aspirations ofyoung people. How pleased we are to see that, following the participation of more than 80,000youth in these conferences, an additional cohort of over 100,000 have joined them in taking part in numerous encounters held since then. Measures to encourage the full engagement of these growing contingents in the activities of the community must constitute a major component of the newPlan.The enthusiastic participation of theyouthalso highlighted the fact that they represent a most responsive element of every receptive population to which the friends have sought to reach out. What has been learned in this regard is how to helpyoung peoplebecome aware of the contribution they can make to the improvement of their society. As consciousness is raised,theyincreasingly identify with the aims of the Bahá'í community and express eagerness to lend their energies to the work under way. Conversations along these lines kindle interest in how the physical and spiritual powers available to them at this time of life can be channelled towards providing for the needs of others, particularly foryounger generations. Special gatherings foryouth, now occurring more frequently at the level of theclusterand even the neighbourhood or village, have proved to be ideal occasions for bringing an intensity to this ongoing conversation, and they are an increasingly common feature of cycles of activity in manyclusters.Experience suggests that a discussion about contributing to the betterment of society fails to tap the deepest springs of motivation if it excludes exploration of spiritual themes. The importance of "doing", of arising to serve and to accompany fellow souls, must be harmonized with the notion of "being", of increasing one's understanding of the divine teachings and mirroring forth spiritual qualities in one's life. And so it is that, having been introduced to the vision of the Faith for humanity and the exalted character of its mission, theyouthnaturally feel a desire to be of service, a desire to whichtraining institutesswiftly respond. Indeed, releasing the capacity of theyouthis, for eachtraining institute, a sacred charge. Yet fostering that capacity as it develops is a responsibility of every institution of the Cause. The readinessyouthdemonstrate to take initiative, whatever lines of action they choose, can obscure the fact that they need sustained support from institutions and agencies in theclusterbeyond the early steps.Youthalso support each other in this regard, coming together in groups to engage in further study and discuss their service, to reinforce one another's efforts and build resolve, looking to ever extend the circle of friendship more widely. The encouragement offered in this way by a network of peers provides young

people with a much-needed alternative to those siren voices that beckon towards the snares of consumerism and compulsive distractions, as well as a counter to the calls to demonize others. It is against this backdrop of enervating materialism and splintering societies that the junior youth programmereveals its particular value at this time. It offers the youth an ideal arena in which to assist those younger than themselves to withstand the corrosive forces that especially target them.As youth advance along the path of service, their endeavours are integrated seamlessly into the activities of thecluster, and as a consequence, the entire community thrives as a cohesive whole. Reaching out to the families ofyoung peopleis a natural way of strengthening community building. Institutions and agencies are being challenged to increase their own capacity in order to find ways of systematically realizing the potential of theyouth. With a greater awareness ofthis age group's circumstances and dynamics, they are able to plan accordingly—for instance, providing opportunities foryouthto study courses intensively, perhaps immediately upon the conclusion of ayouthgathering. The infusion of energy from a vibrantband of youthallows the tempo of the work within theclusterto be accelerated.While it is right to expect great things from those who have so much to give in the path of service, the friends must guard against adopting a narrow outlook on what development to maturity entails. Freedom of movement and availability of time enable manyyouthto serve in ways that are directly related to the needs of the community, but as they advance further into their twenties, their horizons broaden. Other dimensions of a coherent life, equally demanding and highly meritorious, begin to make stronger claims on their attention. For many, an immediate priority will be further education, academic or vocational, according to the possibilities before them, and new spaces for interaction with society open up. Moreover, young women and men become acutely conscious of the exhortations of the Supreme Pen to "enter into wedlock" that they may "bring forth one who will make mention of Me amid My servants" and to "engage in crafts and professions". Having taken up an occupation,youthnaturally try to contribute to their field, or even to advance it in light of the insights they gain from their continued study of the Revelation, andtheystrive to be examples of integrity and excellence in their work. Bahá'u'lláh extols those "that earn a livelihood by their calling and spend upon themselves and upon their kindred for the love of God, the Lord of all worlds." This generation ofyouthwill form families that secure the foundations of flourishing communities. Through their growing love for Bahá'u'lláh and their personal commitment to the standard to which He summons them will their children imbibe the love of God, "commingled with their mother's milk", and always seek the shelter of His divine law. Clearly, then, the responsibility of a Bahá'í community towards young people does not end when they first start serving. The significant decisions they make about the direction of their adult lives will determine whether service to the Cause of

God was only a brief and memorable chapter of their younger years, or a fixed centre of their earthly existence, a lens through which all actions come into focus. We rely on you and your auxiliaries to ensure that the spiritual and material prospects of the youth are given due weight in the deliberations of families, communities, agencies, and institutions.

December 29. On this date in 1921, subsequent to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in Acre on November 28, Shoghi Effendi arrived in Palestine accompanied by Lady Blomfield and his eldest sister, Ruhangiz, who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker.

Original file: 0434.html (position #12)

December 29. On this date in 1921, subsequent to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in Acre on November 28, 1921, Shoghi Effendi arrived in Palestine accompanied by Lady Blomfield and his eldest sister, Ruhangiz, who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker.

On November 28, 1921, 'Abdu'l-Bahá died in Acre, Palestine. Although in the *Kitáb-i-'Ahd* Bahá'u'lláh [designates 'Abdu'l-Bahá's brother Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's successor, in his *Will* 'Abdu'l-Bahá reprimands his brother as "The Center of Sedition, the Prime Mover of mischief" and establishes the institution of the Guardianship, appointing Shoghi Effendi to this newly-created office.

Although in the *Kitáb-i-'Ahd* Bahá'u'lláh designates 'Abdu'l-Bahá's brother Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's successor in his *Will,* 'Abdu'l-Bahá reprimands his brother as "The Center of Sedition, the Prime Mover of mischief" and establishes the

institution of the Guardianship, appointing Shoghi Effendi to this newly-created office.

At the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in Acre on November 28, 1921, Shoghi Effendi was a twenty-four-year-old student enrolled at Balliol College, Oxford. Upon reading the telegram announcing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death, in the home of Wellesley Tudor Pole who was Secretary of the London Local Spiritual Assembly, Shoghi Effendi passed out. Only after spending a few days with John Esslemont did Shoghi Effendi leave England, on December 16, 1921, accompanied by Lady Blomfield and his eldest sister, Ruhangiz, who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker. They arrived in Haifa on December 29.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament, addressed to Shoghi Effendi, was read on January 7, 1922, a few days after Shoghi Effendi's arrival in Haifa. *The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and its Immediate Consequences*

While the Guardianship was to be a perpetual institution of the Administrative Order, it ceased to exist after the death of Shoghi Effendi because he died having violated Bahá'u'lláh's command in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas that "Unto everyone hath been enjoined the writing of a will." Having no children of his own and having declared every living male descendant of Bahá'u'lláh a Covenant-breaker, Shoghi Effendi left no eligible candidates for the office of Guardian, posing a serious problem given his assertion that "In this Dispensation, divine guidance flows on to us in this world after the Prophet's ascension, through first the Master, and then the Guardians." He had furthermore stated in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* that...

> *Divorced from the institution of the Guardianship the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh would be mutilated and permanently deprived of that hereditary principle which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written, has been invariably upheld by the Law of God. "In all the Divine Dispensations," He states, in a Tablet addressed to a follower of the Faith in Persia, "the eldest son hath been given extraordinary distinctions. Even the station of prophethood hath been his birthright." Without such an institution the integrity of the Faith would be imperiled, and the stability of the entire fabric would be gravely endangered. Its prestige would suffer, the means required to enable it to take a long, an uninterrupted view over a series of generations would be completely lacking, and the necessary guidance to define the sphere of the legislative action of its elected representatives would be totally withdrawn.*

So fundamental was the office of the Guardianship, that Bahá'í literature was significantly

altered subsequent to Shoghi Effendi's death, with the notable removal of references to "The First Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith," the "first and present Guardian," and "the lineage of succeeding Guardians." In some cases, references to the Guardian have been replaced or amended with "the Universal House of Justice" and in other instances references to the duties of the Guardian that were in the present tense have been changed to the past tense, indicating that the Guardianship has ceased.

From 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament*...

> *O ye beloved of the Lord! It is incumbent upon the Guardian of the Cause of God to appoint in his own life-time him that shall become his successor, that differences may not arise after his passing. He that is appointed must manifest in himself detachment from all worldly things, must be the essence of purity, must show in himself the fear of God, knowledge, wisdom and learning. Thus, should the first-born of the Guardian of the Cause of God not manifest in himself the truth of the words:—"The child is the secret essence of its sire," that is, should he not inherit of the spiritual within him (the Guardian of the Cause of God) and his glorious lineage not be matched with a goodly character, then must he, (the Guardian of the Cause of God) choose another* branch *to succeed him."*

Comments

December 29. On this date in 1979, Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir, a Hand of the Cause of God and Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, died of a heart attack at the age of 56 in Ecuador.

Original file: 0433.html (position #11)

December 29. On this date in 1979, Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir, a Hand of the Cause of God and Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, died of a heart attack at the age of 56 in Ecuador.

Rahmatu'llah Muhájir was a prominent fourth generation Bahá'í , born on April 4, 1923, in Iran. On October 15, 1951, he married Írán Furútan, the daughter of Hand of the Cause of God and Iran National Spiritual Assembly Member 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, who is known for his censorship of (devout Bahá'í scholar) Jinab-i Fadil's academic works. The newlyweds pioneered to the Mentawai Islands for which they were named Knights of Bahá'u'lláh by Shoghi Effendi in 1954. In 1958, Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi. He died of a heart attack at the age of 56 in Ecuador.

The 25th anniversary of Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir's death was marked in Ecuador by a Growth and Victories conference and graveside ceremony, including a talk by his daughter, Gisu. His daughter Gisu Mohadjer Cook works at the World Bank in Washington, D.C., and lives in Potomac, Maryland. In 2012 she and her husband purchased the historic Dublin Inn in Dublin, New Hampshire where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed for three weeks in 1912, and donated it to the national Baha'i community. Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir's other daughter, Shabnam Rahnema, works as an attorney in London.

On December 30, 1979, the Universal House of Justice sent a cablegram announcing the death of Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir who had passed away one day previous, on December 29, 1979.

> *World Centre: PROFOUNDLY LAMENT UNTIMELY PASSING IN QUITO ECUADOR BELOVED HAND CAUSE RAHMATULLAH MUHAJIR FOLLOWING HEART ATTACK COURSE HIS LATEST SOUTH AMERICAN TOUR. UNSTINTED UNRESTRAINED OUTPOURING OF PHYSICAL SPIRITUAL ENERGIES BY ONE WHO OFFERED HIS ALL PATH SERVICE HAS NOW CEASED. POSTERITY WILL RECORD HIS DEVOTED SERVICES YOUTHFUL YEARS CRADLE FAITH HIS SUBSEQUENT UNIQUE EXPLOITS PIONEERING FIELD SOUTHEAST ASIA WHERE HE WON ACCOLADE KNIGHTHOOD BAHAULLAH HIS CEASELESS EFFORTS OVER TWO DECADES SINCE HIS APPOINTMENT HAND CAUSE STIMULATING IN MANY LANDS EAST WEST PROCESS ENTRY BY TROOPS. FRIENDS ALL CONTINENTS WHO MOURN THIS TRAGIC LOSS NOW SUDDENLY DEPRIVED COLLABORATION ONE WHO ENDEARED HIMSELF TO THEM THROUGH HIS GENTLENESS HIS LUMINOUS PERSONALITY HIS EXEMPLARY UNFLAGGING ZEAL HIS CREATIVE ENTHUSIASTIC APPROACH TO FULFILMENT ASSIGNED GOALS. URGE FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS BEFITTING HIS HIGH STATION UNIQUE ACHIEVEMENTS. MAY HIS RADIANT SOUL ABHA KINGDOM REAP RICH HARVEST HIS DEDICATED SELF-SACRIFICING SERVICES CAUSE GOD. (Cablegram from the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies 30 December 1979)*

Comments

December 29. On this date in 2008, an email to the Universal House of Justice asked "why such terms as “Alla´h-u-Abha´” and “Ya´ Baha´’u’l-Abha´” are used by Baha´’i´s rather than being translated into their native tongues."

Original file: 0432.html (position #10)

December 29. On this date in 2008, an email to the Universal House of Justice asked "why such terms as “Alla´h-u-Abha´” and “Ya´ Baha´’u’l-Abha´” are used by Baha´’i´s rather than being translated into their native tongues."

> *19 May 2015*
>
> *Dear Baha´’i´ Friend,*
>
> *Your email letter of 10 March 2015, asking on behalf of a fellow believer whether it is appropriate to translate the phrase “Alla´h-u-Abha´” into another language for purposes of its recitation 95 times a day, has been received at the Baha´’i´ World Centre and forwarded to our Office for reply. The following has been*

provided in response to a similar query posed to the Universal House of Justice on a previous occasion:

> *The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter of 29 December 2008, asking why such terms as "Alla´h-u-Abha´" and "Ya´ Baha´'u'l-Abha´" are used by Baha´i´s rather than being translated into their native tongues, and has asked us to respond as follows.*
>
> *The House of Justice on another occasion has clarified that the Greatest Name is to be used in its original language for the recitation of "Alla´h-u-Abha´" 95 times a day, as well as for its use in the Long Obligatory Prayer and the Prayer for the Dead. It has also clarified that to translate words such as "Alla´h-u-Abha´", "Ya´ Baha´'u'l-Abha´", "Mashriqu'l-Adhka´r" and "Hazi´ratu'l-Quds" into one's native language is not acceptable. One exception to this is the alternative use of the words "Right of God" or their equivalent into other languages while the term "Huqu´qu'lla´h" gradually becomes a part of Baha´i´ vocabulary.*
>
> *In general, one should bear in mind that all translations are, to some degree, inadequate. For instance, the beloved Guardian has pointed out in ... God Passes By that the word "Baha´" signifies at once the "Glory", the "Splendour" and the "Light" of God; there is no single word in English which can express all these. It is, of course, desirable that there be no loss of meaning through translation; thus, it is preferable that certain terms directly related to the Manifestation of God remain in their original form.*
>
> *(From a letter dated 22 February 2009 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer)*

With loving Baha´i´ greetings,

Office of Correspondence

On July 17, 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Bahá'ís are free to greet each other with Allah-u-Abha when they meet, if they want to, but they should avoid anything which to outsiders, in a western country, might seem like some strange oriental password. We must

be very firm on principles and laws, but very normal and natural in our ways, so as to attract strangers!"

> *893. Bahá'ís May Greet Each Other with "Allah-u-Abha"*
>
> *"The Bahá'ís are free to greet each other with* ***Allah-u-Abha*** *when they meet, if they want to, but they should avoid anything which to outsiders, in a western country, might seem like some strange oriental password. We must be very firm on principles and laws, but very normal and natural in our ways, so as to attract strangers!"*
>
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Comments

December 29. On this date in 1988, the UHJ wrote American Bahá'ís an important and often-quoted letter about rights and freedom of expression in the Bahá'í community, as contrasted with those in American civil society.

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The Universal House of Justice

29 December 1988

To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the United States of America

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

We have noticed with concern evidences of a confusion of attitudes among some of the friends when they encounter difficulties in applying Bahá'í principles to questions of the

day. On the one hand, they acknowledge their belief in Bahá'u'lláh and His teachings; on the other, they invoke Western liberal democratic practices when actions of Bahá'í institutions or of some of their fellow Bahá'ís do not accord with their expectations. At the heart of this confusion are misconceptions of such fundamental issues as individual rights and freedom of expression in the Bahá'í community. The source of the potential difficulties of the situation appears to us to be an inadequacy of Bahá'í perspective on the part of both individual believers and their institutions.

Recognizing the immense challenge you face to resolve such confusion, we pause to reflect with you on these issues in search of a context in which relevant fundamental questions may be discussed and understood in the community.

The extraordinary capacities of the American nation, as well as the superb stewardship of the Bahá'í community within it, have repeatedly been extolled in the writings of our Faith. In His Tablets and utterances, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of the Covenant, projected a compelling vision of the world-embracing prospects of that richly endowed country. "The American nation," He averred, "is equipped and empowered to accomplish that which will adorn the pages of history, to become the envy of the world, and be blest in both the East and the West for the triumph of its people." In another assertion addressed to the Bahá'í community itself, He uttered words of transcendent importance: "... your mission," He affirmed, "is unspeakably glorious. Should success crown your enterprise, America will assuredly evolve into a center from which waves of spiritual power will emanate, and the throne of the Kingdom of God will, in the plenitude of its majesty and glory, be firmly established."

Shoghi Effendi, in various statements, celebrated the remarkable achievements and potential glories of that specially blessed community, but was moved to issue, in The Advent of Divine Justice, a profound warning which is essential to a proper understanding of the relation of that Bahá'í community to the nation from which it has sprung. "The glowing tributes," he solemnly wrote, "so repeatedly and deservedly paid to the capacity, the spirit, the conduct, and the high rank, of the American believers, both individually and as an organic community, must, under no circumstances, be confounded with the characteristics and nature of the people from which God has raised them up. A sharp distinction between that community and that people must be made, and resolutely and fearlessly upheld, if we wish to give due recognition to the transmuting power of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, in its impact on the lives and standards of those who have chosen to enlist under His banner. Otherwise, the supreme and distinguishing function of His Revelation, which is none other than the calling into being of a new race of men, will remain wholly

unrecognized and completely obscured." It is the far-reaching, transformative implications of this distinction which we especially invite you to contemplate.

The vantage point that gives us perspective and is the foundation of our belief and actions rests on our recognition of the sovereignty of God and our submission to His will as revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, His supreme Manifestation for this promised Day. To accept the Prophet of God in His time and to abide by His bidding are the two essential, inseparable duties which each soul was created to fulfill. One exercises these twin duties by one's own choice, an act constituting the highest expression of the free will with which every human being has been endowed by an all-loving Creator.

The vehicle in this resplendent Age for the practical fulfillment of these duties is the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh; it is, indeed, the potent instrument by which individual belief in Him is translated into constructive deeds. The Covenant comprises divinely conceived arrangements necessary to preserve the organic unity of the Cause. It therefore engenders a motivating power which, as the beloved Master tells us, "like unto the artery, beats and pulsates in the body of the world." "It is indubitably clear," He asserts, "that the pivot of the oneness of mankind is nothing else but the power of the Covenant." Through it the meaning of the Word, both in theory and practice, is made evident in the life and work of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the appointed Interpreter, the perfect Exemplar, the Center of the Covenant. Through it the processes of the Administrative Order—"this unique, this wondrous System"—are made to operate.

In emphasizing its distinctiveness, Shoghi Effendi has pointed out that "this Administrative Order is fundamentally different from anything that any Prophet has previously established, inasmuch as Bahá'u'lláh has Himself revealed its principles, established its institutions, appointed the person to interpret His Word and conferred the necessary authority on the body designed to supplement and apply His legislative ordinances." In another statement, he maintains that "It would be utterly misleading to attempt a comparison between this unique, divinely conceived Order and any of the diverse systems which the minds of men, at various periods of their history, have contrived for the government of human institutions." "Such an attempt," he felt, "would in itself betray a lack of complete appreciation of the excellence of the handiwork of its great Author."

The lack of such appreciation will detract from the perspective of anyone who measures Bahá'í administrative processes against practices prevalent in today's society. For notwithstanding its inclination to democratic methods in the administration of its affairs, and regardless of the resemblance of some of its features to those of other systems, the Administrative Order is not to be viewed merely as an improvement on past and existing

systems; it represents a departure both in origin and in concept. “This newborn Administrative Order,” as Shoghi Effendi has explained, “incorporates within its structure certain elements which are to be found in each of the three recognized forms of secular government, without being in any sense a mere replica of any one of them, and without introducing within its machinery any of the objectionable features which they inherently possess. It blends and harmonizes, as no government fashioned by mortal hands has as yet accomplished, the salutary truths which each of these systems undoubtedly contains without vitiating the integrity of those God-given verities on which it is ultimately founded.”

You are, no doubt, conversant with the Guardian’s expatiations on this theme. Why, then, this insistent emphasis? Why this repeated review of fundamentals? This emphasis, this review, is to sound an appeal for solid thinking, for the attainment of correct perspectives, for the adoption of proper attitudes. And these are impossible without a deep appreciation of Bahá’í fundamentals.

The great emphasis on the distinctiveness of the Order of Bahá’u’lláh is not meant to belittle existing systems of government. Indeed, they are to be recognized as the fruit of a vast period of social evolution, representing an advanced stage in the development of social organization. What motivates us is the knowledge that the supreme mission of the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, the Bearer of that Order, is, as Shoghi Effendi pointed out, “none other but the achievement of this organic and spiritual unity of the whole body of nations,” indicating the “coming of age of the entire human race.” The astounding implication of this is the near prospect of attaining an age-old hope, now made possible at long last by the coming of Bahá’u’lláh. In practical terms, His mission signals the advent of “an organic change in the structure of present-day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced.” It is a fresh manifestation of the direct involvement of God in history, a reassurance that His children have not been left to drift, a sign of the outpouring of a heavenly grace that will enable all humanity to be free at last from conflict and contention to ascend the heights of world peace and divine civilization. Beyond all else, it is a demonstration of that love for His children, which He knew in the depth of His “immemorial being” and in the “ancient eternity” of His Essence, and which caused Him to create us all. In the noblest sense, then, attention to the requirements of His World Order is a reciprocation of that love.

It is this perspective that helps us to understand the question of freedom and its place in Bahá’í thought and action. The idea and the fact of freedom pervade all human concerns in

an infinitude of notions and modes. Freedom is indeed essential to all expressions of human life.

Freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of action are among the freedoms which have received the ardent attention of social thinkers across the centuries. The resulting outflow of such profound thought has exerted a tremendous liberating influence in the shaping of modern society. Generations of the oppressed have fought and died in the name of freedom. Certainly the want of freedom from oppression has been a dominant factor in the turmoil of the times: witness the plethora of movements which have resulted in the rapid emergence of new nations in the latter part of the twentieth century. A true reading of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh leaves no doubt as to the high importance of these freedoms to constructive social processes. Consider, for instance, Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation to the kings and rulers. Can it not be deduced from this alone that attainment of freedom is a significant purpose of His Revelation? His denunciations of tyranny and His urgent appeals on behalf of the oppressed provide unmistakable proof. But does not the freedom foreshadowed by His Revelation imply nobler, ampler manifestations of human achievement? Does it not indicate an organic relationship between the internal and external realities of man such as has not yet been attained?

In his summary of significant Bahá'í teachings, Shoghi Effendi wrote that Bahá'u'lláh "inculcates the principle of 'moderation in all things'; declares that whatsoever, be it 'liberty, civilization and the like,' 'passeth beyond the limits of moderation' must 'exercise a pernicious influence upon men'; observes that western civilization has gravely perturbed and alarmed the peoples of the world; and predicts that the day is approaching when the 'flame' of a civilization 'carried to excess' 'will devour the cities.'"

Expounding the theme of liberty, Bahá'u'lláh asserted that "the embodiment of liberty and its symbol is the animal"; that "liberty causeth man to overstep the bounds of propriety, and to infringe on the dignity of his station"; that "true liberty consisteth in man's submission unto My commandments." "We approve of liberty in certain circumstances," He declared, "and refuse to sanction it in others." But He gave the assurance that, "Were men to observe that which We have sent down unto them from the Heaven of Revelation, they would, of a certainty, attain unto perfect liberty." And again, He said, "Mankind in its entirety must firmly adhere to whatsoever hath been revealed and vouchsafed unto it. Then and only then will it attain unto true liberty."

Bahá'u'lláh's assertions clearly call for an examination of current assumptions. Should liberty be as free as is supposed in contemporary Western thought? Where does freedom limit our possibilities for progress, and where do limits free us to thrive? What are the

limits to the expansion of freedom? For so fluid and elastic are its qualities of application and expression that the concept of freedom in any given situation is likely to assume a different latitude from one mind to another; these qualities are, alas, susceptible to the employment alike of good and evil. Is it any wonder, then, that Bahá'u'lláh exhorts us to submission to the will of God?

Since any constructive view of freedom implies limits, further questions are inevitable: What are the latitudes of freedom in the Bahá'í community? How are these to be determined? Because human beings have been created to "carry forward an ever-advancing civilization," the exercise of freedom, it may be deduced, is intended to enable all to fulfill this purpose in their individual lives and in their collective functioning as a society. Hence whatever in principle is required to realize this purpose gauges the latitudes or limits of freedom.

Contemplating Bahá'u'lláh's warning that "whatsoever passeth beyond the limits of moderation will cease to exert a beneficial influence," we come to appreciate that the Administrative Order He has conceived embodies the operating principles which are necessary to the maintenance of that moderation which will ensure the "true liberty" of humankind. All things considered, does the Administrative Order not appear to be the structure of freedom for our Age? 'Abdu'l-Bahá offers us comfort in this thought, for He has said that "the moderate freedom which guarantees the welfare of the world of mankind and maintains and preserves the universal relationships is found in its fullest power and extension in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh."

Within this framework of freedom a pattern is set for institutional and individual behavior which depends for its efficacy not so much on the force of law, which admittedly must be respected, as on the recognition of a mutuality of benefits, and on the spirit of cooperation maintained by the willingness, the courage, the sense of responsibility, and the initiative of individuals—these being expressions of their devotion and submission to the will of God. Thus there is a balance of freedom between the institution, whether national or local, and the individuals who sustain its existence.

Consider, for example, the Local Spiritual Assembly, the methods of its formation and the role of individuals in electing it. The voter elects with the understanding that he is free to choose without any interference whomever his conscience prompts him to select, and he freely accepts the authority of the outcome. In the act of voting, the individual subscribes to a covenant by which the orderliness of society is upheld. The Assembly has the responsibility to guide, direct and decide on community affairs and the right to be obeyed

and supported by members of the community. The individual has the responsibility to establish and maintain the Assembly through election, the offering of advice, moral support and material assistance; and he has the right to be heard by it, to receive its guidance and assistance, and to appeal from any Assembly decision which he conscientiously feels is unjust or detrimental to the interests of the community.

But occupation with the mechanics of Bahá'í Administration, divorced from the animating spirit of the Cause, leads to a distortion, to an arid secularization foreign to the nature of the Administration. Equally significant to the procedures for election—to further extend the example—is the evocation of that rarefied atmosphere of prayer and reflection, that quiet dignity of the process, devoid of nominations and campaigning, in which the individual's freedom to choose is limited only by his own conscience, exercised in private in an attitude that invites communion with the Holy Spirit. In this sphere, the elector regards the outcome as an expression of the will of God, and those elected as being primarily responsible to that will, not to the constituency which elected them. An election thus conducted portrays an aspect of that organic unity of the inner and outer realities of human life which is necessary to the construction of a mature society in this new Age. In no other system do individuals exercise such a breadth of freedom in the electoral process.

The equilibrium of responsibilities implied by all this presupposes maturity on the part of all concerned. This maturity has an apt analogy in adulthood in human beings. How significant is the difference between infancy and childhood, adolescence and adulthood! In a period of history dominated by the surging energy, the rebellious spirit and frenetic activity of adolescence, it is difficult to grasp the distinguishing elements of the mature society to which Bahá'u'lláh beckons all humanity. The models of the old world order blur vision of that which must be perceived; for these models were, in many instances, conceived in rebellion and retain the characteristics of the revolutions peculiar to an adolescent, albeit necessary, period in the evolution of human society. The very philosophies which have provided the intellectual content of such revolutions—Hobbes, Locke, Jefferson, Mill come readily to mind—were inspired by protest against the oppressive conditions which revolutions were intended to remedy.

These characteristics are conspicuous, for example, in the inordinate skepticism regarding authority, and consequently, in the grudging respect which the citizens of various nations show toward their governments; they have become pronounced in the incessant promotion of individualism, often to the detriment of the wider interests of society. How aptly, even after the lapse of half a century, Shoghi Effendi's views, as conveyed by his secretary, fit the contemporary scene: "Our present generation, mainly due to the corruptions that have

been identified with organizations, seem to stand against any institution. Religion as an institution is denounced. Government as an institution is denounced. Even marriage as an institution is denounced. We Bahá'ís should not be blinded by such prevalent notions. If such were the case, all the divine Manifestations would not have invariably appointed someone to succeed Them. Undoubtedly, corruptions did enter those institutions, but these corruptions were not due to the very nature of the institutions but to the lack of proper directions as to their powers and nature of their perpetuation. What Bahá'u'lláh has done is not to eliminate all institutions in the Cause but to provide the necessary safeguards that would eliminate corruptions that caused the fall of previous institutions. What those safeguards are is most interesting to study and find out and also most essential to know."

We make these observations not to indulge in criticism of any system, but rather to open up lines of thought, to encourage a reexamination of the bases of modern society, and to engender a perspective for consideration of the distinctive features of the Order of Bahá'u'lláh. What, it could be asked, was the nature of society that gave rise to such characteristics and such philosophies? Where have these taken mankind? Has their employment satisfied the needs and expectations of the human spirit? The answers to such questions could lay the ground for a contrasting observation of the origin and nature of the characteristics and philosophy underlying that Order.

As to freedom of expression, a fundamental principle of the Cause, the Administrative Order provides unique methods and channels for its exercise and maintenance; these have been amply described in the writings of the Faith, but they are not yet clearly understood by the friends. For Bahá'u'lláh has extended the scope and deepened the meaning of self-expression. In His elevation of art and of work performed in the service of humanity to acts of worship can be discerned enormous prospects for a new birth of expression in the civilization anticipated by His World Order. The significance of this principle, now so greatly amplified by the Lord of the Age, cannot be doubted; but it is in its ramifications in speech that keen understanding is urgently needed. From a Bahá'í point of view, the exercise of freedom of speech must necessarily be disciplined by a profound appreciation of both the positive and negative dimensions of freedom, on the one hand, and of speech, on the other.

Bahá'u'lláh warns us that "the tongue is a smoldering fire, and excess of speech a deadly poison." "Material fire consumeth the body," He says in elaborating the point, "whereas the fire of the tongue devoureth both heart and soul. The force of the former lasteth but for a time, whilst the effects of the latter endureth a century." In tracing the framework of free speech, He again advises "moderation." "Human utterance is an essence which aspireth to

exert its influence and needeth moderation," He states, adding, "As to its influence, this is conditional upon refinement which in turn is dependent upon hearts which are detached and pure. As to its moderation, this hath to be combined with tact and wisdom as prescribed in the Holy Scriptures and Tablets."

Also relevant to what is said, and how, is when it is said. For speech, as for so many other things, there is a season. Bahá'u'lláh reinforces this understanding by drawing attention to the maxim that "Not everything that a man knoweth can be disclosed, nor can everything that he can disclose be regarded as timely, nor can every timely utterance be considered as suited to the capacity of those who hear it."

Speech is a powerful phenomenon. Its freedom is both to be extolled and feared. It calls for an acute exercise of judgment, since both the limitation of speech and the excess of it can lead to dire consequences. Thus there exist in the system of Bahá'u'lláh checks and balances necessary to the beneficial uses of this freedom in the onward development of society. A careful examination of the principles of Bahá'í consultation and the formal and informal arrangements for employing them offer new insights into the dynamics of freedom of expression.

As it is beyond the scope of this letter to expatiate upon these principles, let it suffice to recall briefly certain of the requisites of consultation, particularly for those who serve on Spiritual Assemblies. Love and harmony, purity of motive, humility and lowliness amongst the friends, patience and long-suffering in difficulties—these inform the attitude with which they proceed "with the utmost devotion, courtesy, dignity, care and moderation to express their views," each using "perfect liberty" both in so doing and in "unveiling the proof of his demonstration." "If another contradicts him, he must not become excited because if there be no investigation or verification of questions and matters, the agreeable view will not be discovered neither understood." "The shining spark of truth cometh forth only after the clash of differing opinions." If unanimity is not subsequently achieved, decisions are arrived at by majority vote.

Once a decision has been reached, all members of the consultative body, having had the opportunity fully to state their views, agree wholeheartedly to support the outcome. What if the minority view is right? "If they agree upon a subject," 'Abdu'l-Bahá has explained, "even though it be wrong, it is better than to disagree and be in the right, for this difference will produce the demolition of the divine foundation. Though one of the parties may be in the right and they disagree, that will be the cause of a thousand wrongs, but if they agree and both parties are in the wrong, as it is in unity, the truth will be revealed and the wrong made right." Implicit in this approach to the social utility of thought is the profundity of the

change in the standard of public discussion intended by Bahá'u'lláh for a mature society.

The qualities by which the individual can achieve the personal discipline necessary to successful consultation find their full expression in what Shoghi Effendi regarded as the "spirit of a true Bahá'í." Ponder, for instance, the appealing remark addressed to your own community in one of his earliest letters: "Nothing short of the spirit of a true Bahá'í can hope to reconcile the principles of mercy and justice, of freedom and submission, of the sanctity of the right of the individual and of self-surrender, of vigilance, discretion and prudence on the one hand, and fellowship, candor, and courage on the other." This was an appeal to the maturity and the distinction towards which he repeatedly directed their thoughts.

Because the Most Great Peace is the object of our longing, a primary effort of the Bahá'í community is to reduce the incidence of conflict and contention, which are categorically forbidden in the Most Holy Book. Does this mean that one may not express critical thought? Absolutely not. How can there be the candor called for in consultation if there is no critical thought? How is the individual to exercise his responsibilities to the Cause, if he is not allowed the freedom to express his views? Has Shoghi Effendi not stated that "at the very root of the Cause lies the principle of the undoubted right of the individual to self-expression, his freedom to declare his conscience and set forth his views"?

The Administrative Order provides channels for expression of criticism, acknowledging, as a matter of principle, that "it is not only the right, but the vital responsibility of every loyal and intelligent member of the community to offer fully and frankly, but with due respect and consideration to the authority of the Assembly, any suggestion, recommendation or criticism he conscientiously feels he should in order to improve and remedy certain existing conditions or trends in his local community." Correspondingly, the Assembly has the duty "to give careful consideration to any such views submitted to them."

Apart from the direct access which one has to an Assembly, local or national, or to a Counselor or Auxiliary Board member, there are specific occasions for the airing of one's views in the community. The most frequent of these occasions for any Bahá'í is the Nineteen Day Feast which, "besides its social and spiritual aspects, fulfills various administrative needs and requirements of the community, chief among them being the need for open and constructive criticism and deliberation regarding the state of affairs within the local Bahá'í community." At the same time, Shoghi Effendi's advice, as conveyed by his secretary, goes on to stress the point that "all criticisms and discussions of a negative character which may result in undermining the authority of the Assembly as a body should

be strictly avoided. For otherwise the order of the Cause itself will be endangered, and confusion and discord will reign in the community."

Clearly, then, there is more to be considered than the critic's right to self-expression; the unifying spirit of the Cause of God must also be preserved, the authority of its laws and ordinances safeguarded, authority being an indispensable aspect of freedom. Motive, manner, mode, become relevant; but there is also the matter of love: love for one's fellows, love for one's community, love for one's institutions.

The responsibility resting on the individual to conduct himself in such a way as to ensure the stability of society takes on elemental importance in this context. For vital as it is to the progress of society, criticism is a two-edged sword: it is all too often the harbinger of conflict and contention. The balanced processes of the Administrative Order are meant to prevent this essential activity from degenerating to any form of dissent that breeds opposition and its dreadful schismatic consequences. How incalculable have been the negative results of ill-directed criticism: in the catastrophic divergences it has created in religion, in the equally contentious factions it has spawned in political systems, which have dignified conflict by institutionalizing such concepts as the "loyal opposition" which attach to one or another of the various categories of political opinion—conservative, liberal, progressive, reactionary, and so forth.

If Bahá'í individuals deliberately ignore the principles imbedded in the Order which Bahá'u'lláh Himself has established to remedy divisiveness in the human family, the Cause for which so much has been sacrificed will surely be set back in its mission to rescue world society from complete disintegration. May not the existence of the Covenant be invoked again and again, so that such repetition may preserve the needed perspective? For, in this age, the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh has been protected against the baneful effects of the misuse of the process of criticism; this has been done by the institution of the Covenant and by the provision of a universal administrative system which incorporates within itself the mechanisms for drawing out the constructive ideas of individuals and using them for the benefit of the entire system. Admonishing the people to uphold the unifying purpose of the Cause, Bahá'u'lláh, in the Book of His Covenant, addresses these poignant words to them: "Let not the means of order be made the cause of confusion and the instrument of union an occasion for discord." Such assertions emphasize a crucial point; it is this: In terms of the Covenant, dissidence is a moral and intellectual contradiction of the main objective animating the Bahá'í community, namely, the establishment of the unity of mankind.

We return to the phenomenal characteristics of speech. Content, volume, style, tact,

wisdom, timeliness are among the critical factors in determining the effects of speech for good or evil. Consequently, the friends need ever to be conscious of the significance of this activity which so distinguishes human beings from other forms of life, and they must exercise it judiciously. Their efforts at such discipline will give birth to an etiquette of expression worthy of the approaching maturity of the human race. Just as this discipline applies to the spoken word, it applies equally to the written word; and it profoundly affects the operation of the press.

The significance and role of the press in a new world system are conspicuous in the emphasis which the Order of Bahá'u'lláh places on accessibility to information at all levels of society. Shoghi Effendi tells us that Bahá'u'lláh makes "specific reference to 'the swiftly appearing newspapers,' describes them as 'the mirror of the world' and as 'an amazing and potent phenomenon,' and prescribes to all who are responsible for their production the duty to be sanctified from malice, passion and prejudice, to be just and fair-minded, to be painstaking in their inquiries, and ascertain all the facts in every situation."

In His social treatise, The Secret of Divine Civilization, 'Abdu'l-Bahá offers insight as to the indispensability of the press in future society. He says it is "urgent that beneficial articles and books be written, clearly and definitely establishing what the present-day requirements of the people are, and what will conduce to the happiness and advancement of society." Further, He writes of the "publication of high thoughts" as the "dynamic power in the arteries of life," "the very soul of the world." Moreover, He states that "Public opinion must be directed toward whatever is worthy of this day, and this is impossible except through the use of adequate arguments and the adducing of clear, comprehensive and conclusive proofs."

As to manner and style, Bahá'u'lláh has exhorted "authors among the friends" to "write in such a way as would be acceptable to fair-minded souls, and not lead to caviling by the people." And He issues a reminder: "We have said in the past that one word hath the influence of spring and causeth hearts to become fresh and verdant, while another is like unto blight which causeth the blossoms and flowers to wither."

In the light of all this, the code of conduct of the press must embrace the principles and objectives of consultation as revealed by Bahá'u'lláh. Only in this way will the press be able to make its full contribution to the preservation of the rights of the people and become a powerful instrument in the consultative processes of society, and hence for the unity of the human race.

Comments

A35821363: Some of the friends have suggested that the emergence of the Faith from obscurity indicates the timeliness of ceasing observance in the Bahá'í community of certain restraints; particularly are they concerned about the temporary necessity of review before publishing.That the Faith has emerged from obscurity on a global scale is certain. This definitely marks a triumphant stage in the efforts of the community to register its

existence on the minds of those who influence world events. Consider how, because of the sufferings and sacrifices of the friends in Iran, the concerns of the community in these respects have become a matter of discussion in the most influential parliaments and the most important international forums on earth. That this emergence frees the Cause to pursue objectives hitherto unreachable is also undeniable; but that it marks the attainment of the community's anticipated maturity is entirely doubtful.How could it have attained maturity, when we know from the clear guidance of the beloved Guardian that obscurity is but one of the many stages in the long evolution towards the Faith's golden destiny? Has he not advised us all that the subsequent stage of oppression must precede the stages of its emancipation and its recognition as a world religion? Can the friends forget the oft-quoted warning of 'Abdu'l-Bahá concerning the bitter opposition that will confront the Cause in various lands on all continents? In the case of the American believers, has Shoghi Effendi not alluded to this coming fury in his description of them as "the invincible Army of Bahá'u'lláh, who in the West, and at one of its potential storm centers is to fight, in His name and for His sake, one of its fiercest and most glorious battles"?Those who are anxious to relax all restraint, who invoke freedom of speech as the rationale for publishing every and any thing concerning the Bahá'í community, who call for the immediate termination of the practice of review now that the Faith has emerged from obscurity—are they not aware of these sobering prospects? Widespread as has been the public revulsion to the current persecutions in Iran, let there be no mistake about the certainty of the opposition which must yet be confronted in many countries, including that which is the Cradle of the Administrative Order itself.The Faith is as yet in its infancy. Despite its emergence from obscurity, even now the vast majority of the human race remains ignorant of its existence; moreover, the vast majority of its adherents are relatively new Bahá'ís. The change implied by this new stage in its evolution is that whereas heretofore this tender plant was protected in its obscurity from the attention of external elements, it has now become exposed. This exposure invites close observation, and that observation will eventually lead to opposition in various quarters. So, far from adopting a carefree attitude, the community must be conscious of the necessity to present a correct view of itself and an accurate understanding of its purpose to a largely skeptical public. A greater effort, a greater care must now be exercised to ensure its protection against the malice of the ignorant and the unwisdom of its friends.Let us all remember that the struggle of the infant Faith of God to thrive is beset with the turmoil of the present age. Like a tender shoot just barely discernible above ground, it must be nurtured to strength and maturity and buttressed as necessary against the blight of strong winds and deadly entanglements with weeds and thistles. If we to whose care this plant has been entrusted are insensitive to its tenderness, the great tree which is its certain potential will be hindered in its growth towards the

spreading of its sheltering branches over all humankind. From this perspective we must all consider the latent danger to the Cause of ill-advised actions and exaggerated expectations; and particularly must we all be concerned about the effects of words, especially those put in print. It is here that Bahá'í authors and publishers need to be attentive and exert rigorous discipline upon themselves, as well as abide by the requirements of review at this early stage in the development of the Faith.

December 30. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís his "feelings of great pride and deep sorrow that he read of the sufferings of the German believers." In 1934 he wrote the Nazis would respect "individual conscience in all matters pertaining to religion."

December 30. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís his "feelings of great pride and deep sorrow that he read of the sufferings of the German believers." In 1934 he wrote the Nazis would respect "individual conscience in all matters pertaining to religion."

Original file: 0430.html (position #8)

December 30. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís his "feelings of great pride and deep sorrow that he read of the sufferings of the German believers." In 1934 he wrote the Nazis would respect "individual conscience in all matters pertaining to religion." In 1938, one month after the *Anschluss* of Austria, he wrote a letter stating "it made him immensely happy to realize that the friends in Germany and Austria have been again drawn together.

On February 11, 1934, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to a German Bahá'í stating about the Nazi government that "obedience to the regulations and orders of the state is indeed, the sacred obligation of every true and loyal Bahá'í" and that "our German friends are

under the sacred obligation to whole-heartedly obey the existing political regime, whatever be their personal views and criticisms of its actual working. There is nothing more contrary to the spirit of the Cause than open rebellion against the governmental authorities of a country, specially if they do not interfere in and do not oppose the inner and sacred beliefs and religious convictions of the individual. And there is every reason to believe that the present regime in Germany, which has thus far refused to trample upon the domain of individual conscience in all matters pertaining to religion will never encroach upon it in the near future, unless some unforeseen and unexpected changes take place. And this seems to be doubtful at present."

On April 25, 1938, one month after Nazi Germany's *Anschluss* of Austria, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated "it made him immensely happy to realize that the friends in Germany and Austria have been again drawn together, and are closer than ever in the past. He hopes that the removal of the barriers which have hitherto so sadly separated the German and Austrian communities will mark the beginning of a new era of unprecedented growth and expansion in your affairs."

> *30 December 1945 Beloved Bahá'í Friends:*
>
> *Your letter of April 4th has just been received by our beloved Guardian, and he has instructed me to answer it at once on his behalf.*
>
> *It was with feelings of great pride and deep sorrow that he read of the sufferings of the German believers for their Faith and the persecutions they underwent so heroically, and with such unflinching loyalty, for our Holy Cause.*
>
> *All during these long and tragic years of war his thoughts have been with the Community of the German believers, and his prayers have constantly been offered for their protection and the lightening of their heavy burden. Other Bahá'í Communities, like France and England, have also suffered, but not to the extent of the German and Burmese friends who have been in lands ravaged by war and invasion, and in the hands, at the same time, of political parties who persecuted them.*
>
> *The loss of all the records of the National and Local Assemblies is indeed very great, and he hopes that your family, Dr. Muhlschlegel, Dr. Schmidt, Herr Jorn, Anna &Kostlin, Frau Schweizer, Frau Schwarz--, in fact, all the old believers, will try and reconstruct from memory, and write down, as much of the history of the*

Cause in Germany as they can remember, so that some accurate records for the future will remain. He would also like you to write a comprehensive account of what the Bahá'ís have endured in Germany since 1937 for the "Bahá'í World", vol. X, and send it to him as soon as possible. The news of the German believers' activities has been sadly missed in the last two volumes, and he is anxious to have them take their place again as soon as possible.

He has just written to N.S.A. of America urging them to help, and do all they can to protect the German Bahá'ís; he has also urged them to make every effort to get German Bahá'í books published, and sent to Germany as soon as possible.

You all have a tremendous task before you. He knows how great is the suffering for just ordinary German citizens at present as an aftermath of the war--but in spite of these physical hardships the German believers are called upon to establish again the institutions of their Faith, teach its life-giving message to the masses, and help their country to obtain the spiritual destiny 'Abdu'l-Bahá foresaw for it. You may be sure the Guardian and the Bahá'ís everywhere will do all in their power to help the German believers accomplish their tasks.

Please assure all the friends--especially those who have lost dear ones in the war--of his most loving and ardent prayers on their behalf, and of his feelings of pride and gratitude for their devotion and loyalty to the Faith.

To you all he sends his loving greetings, his deep appreciation of your spirit, and the assurance of his constant prayers....

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Dearly-beloved friends:

My heart is filled with joy, pride and gratitude as I witness, thru the receipt of your most welcome letter, the evidences of the protection of the Almighty and of the vitality of the faith of the long-suffering German believers, who have laboured so devotedly and valiantly during so long and crucial a period and who as a community have survived the greatest ordeal in the history of their Faith in that land. My prayers during these years of danger, of stress, of suspense and anxiety have ever surrounded them, and I rejoice to learn of their safety, their unity, their zeal, and their determination to arise and resume the great and historic work they are destined to carry to a triumphant conclusion in the years that lie ahead. The organization of spiritual assemblies, the reestablishment of the national assembly,

the formation of national committees are the immediate objectives, and should, if possible be carried out with the utmost speed and vigour, for upon them will rest the expansion and consolidation of the activities of a sorely-tried Faith. I am appealing to various Bahá'í communities in East and West to lend their assistance in whatever manner possible to the arduous task of reconstruction that now faces the German believers. I long to hear of the news of the friends in other parts of that land and will do my utmost to aid them to resume their activity and services to our beloved Faith. Please assure them all of my great love, of my profound admiration, of my bright hopes for their future, of my heartfelt gratitude for their perseverance and of my fervent prayers for their future success.

Your true brother,

Shoghi Dec. 30th, 1945

Dear Bahá'í Friends:

It was with great joy that the beloved Guardian received your letter of Aug. 1st, and he has instructed me to answer it on his behalf.

During these long, sad, years of separation his thoughts have constantly been with the well-loved German Bahá'ís, and his ardent prayers have been offered in the Holy Shrines for their protection and the protection of the Faith there.

Now that the friends are once again free to profess their beliefs, hold their meetings, teach the Cause, and uphold its institutions, he hopes they will exert their utmost to reestablish, as speedily as possible, the Bahá'í Communities of Germany. The Faith in that land had, before it was suppressed and banned, just began to enjoy the fruits of many long years of labour to promulgate it, and create its administrative bodies; he hopes that all the German Bahá'ís will unite to bring it to the former level of prosperity it enjoyed.

He wishes to assure you all, and through you, all your Bahá'í brothers and sisters in Germany, that he will do all in his power to assist you in your labours, and that your &fellow-Baha'is the world over will likewise aid you as much as they can.

The beloved Master cherished very bright hopes for the future of the German Bahá'ís. His promises and prophecies will surely be fulfilled, and the Holy Faith not only be reestablished in Germany but grow and expand as never before.

> *The Guardian has urged the American N.S.A. to supply the German Bahá'ís with literature as soon as possible; this will enable you to bring the teachings to your sore-stricken countrymen, and enlist them under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh.*
>
> *You may be sure the Guardian's loving prayers surround you all and sustain you in your labours for the Cause....*
>
> *In the Guardian's own handwriting:*
>
> *Dearly-beloved Friends:*
>
> *Your joint and most welcome letter brought indescribable joy to my heart. I am thrilled by this latest and indeed most significant evidence of the unfailing protection of the Almighty, and of His manifold blessings vouchsafed to His dearly-beloved and worthy servants labouring so heroically for His Faith in that land. Though I am greatly saddened by the fate that has overtaken a few of them during this prolonged ordeal they have experienced, I rejoice and am filled with gratitude, pride and happiness to realize that the Faith itself has survived this fiery test, and has demonstrated its resilience, its vitality and incorruptibility after so crucial a period of stress, of suffering and danger. The duty facing the triumphant community in your land is to reconstruct, with the utmost speed and vigour its administrative institutions, and above all, its national assembly. I will appeal to our brethren in East and West to offer every assistance in their power for the rehabilitation of a community which is destined to play, in accordance with `Abdu'l-Bahá's prophecy, so vital a role in the future orientation and expansion of the world-wide Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. I will do everything I possibly can to help it in its task and assist it in the achievement of its high destiny. I will pray and supplicate on its behalf the abundant blessings of the Almighty, that its influence may revive, its number increase, its activities multiply, its resource develop, and its mission be fulfilled.*
>
> *Your true and grateful brother,*
>
> *Shoghi*

On February 11, 1934, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to a German Bahá'í stating about the Nazi government that "obedience to the regulations and orders of the state is indeed, the sacred obligation of every true and loyal Bahá'í" and that "our German friends are

under the sacred obligation to whole-heartedly obey the existing political regime, whatever be their personal views and criticisms of its actual working. There is nothing more contrary to the spirit of the Cause than open rebellion against the governmental authorities of a country, specially if they do not interfere in and do not oppose the inner and sacred beliefs and religious convictions of the individual. And there is every reason to believe that the present regime in Germany, which has thus far refused to trample upon the domain of individual conscience in all matters pertaining to religion will never encroach upon it in the near future, unless some unforeseen and unexpected changes take place. And this seems to be doubtful at present."

> *11 February 1934*
>
> *Dear Bahá'í Brother,*
>
> *I am charged by the Guardian to thank you for your letter of Jan. 30th as well as for the enclosed pamphlet containing the address delivered by Herr Hitler on Oct. 14th, 1933, on the subject of Germany's attitude towards peace, all of which he read with deepest care and sustained interest. He wishes me to convey to you and to all the members of your German National Assembly and through them to all the followers of the Faith in Germany his views on the present conditions in that land, and particularly in their relation to the nature and scope of the Bahá'í activities of our German believers.*
>
> *At the outset it should be made indubitably clear that the Bahá'í Cause being essentially a religious movement of a spiritual character stands above every political party or group, and thus cannot and should not act in contravention to the principles, laws, and doctrines of any government.* ***Obedience to the regulations and orders of the state is indeed, the sacred obligation of every true and loyal Bahá'í.*** *Both Bahá'u'lláh and `Abdu'l-Bahá have urged us all to be submissive and loyal to the political authorities of our respective countries. It follows, therefore, that* ***our German friends are under the sacred obligation to whole-heartedly obey the existing political regime, whatever be their personal views and criticisms of its actual working. There is nothing more contrary to the spirit of the Cause than open rebellion against the governmental authorities of a country, specially if they do not interfere in and do not oppose the inner and sacred beliefs and religious convictions of the individual. And there is***

every reason to believe that the present regime in Germany which has thus far refused to trample upon the domain of individual conscience in all matters pertaining to religion will never encroach upon it in the near future, unless some unforeseen and unexpected changes take place. And this seems to be doubtful at present.

For whereas the friends should obey the government under which they live, even at the risk of sacrificing all their administrative affairs and interests, they should under no circumstances suffer their inner religious beliefs and convictions to be violated and transgressed by any authority whatever. ***A distinction of a fundamental importance must, therefore, be made between spiritual and administrative matters. Whereas the former are sacred and inviolable, and hence cannot be subject to compromise, the latter are secondary and can consequently be given up and even sacrificed for the sake of obedience to the laws and regulations of the government. Obedience to the state is so vital a principle of the Cause that should the authorities in Germany decide to-day to prevent the Bahá'ís from holding any meeting or publishing any literature they should obey and be as submissive as our Russian believers have thus far been under the Soviet regime. But, as already pointed out, such an allegiance is confined merely to administrative matters which if checked can only retard the progress of the Faith for some time. In matters of belief, however, no compromise whatever should be allowed, even though the outcome of it be death or expulsion***

There is one more point to be emphasized in this connection. The principle of obedience to government does not place any Bahá'í under the obligation of identifying the teachings of his Faith with the political program enforced by the government. For such an identification, besides being erroneous and contrary to both the spirit as well as the form of the Bahá'í message, would necessarily create a conflict within the conscience of every loyal believer.

For reasons which are only too obvious the Bahá'í philosophy of social and political organization cannot be fully reconciled with the political doctrines and conceptions that are current and much in vogue to-day. The wave of nationalism, so aggressive and so contagious in its effects, which has swept not only over Europe but over a large part of mankind is, indeed, the very negation of the gospel of peace and of brotherhood proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. The actual trend in the

> *political world is, indeed, far from being in the direction of the Bahá'í teachings. The world is drawing nearer and nearer to a universal catastrophe which will mark the end of a bankrupt and of a fundamentally defective civilization.*
>
> *From such considerations we can well conclude that we as Bahá'ís can in no wise identify the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh with man-made creeds and conceptions, which by their very nature are impotent to save the world from the dangers with which it is being so fiercely and so increasingly assailed.*
>
> *The Guardian hopes that these brief explanations will be sufficient to guide our German National Assembly in their efforts to safeguard and promote the interests of the Faith, and that through them they will be given a new vision of the Cause and a fresh determination to carry forward its message to the world at large.*
>
> *With greetings and best wishes to you and to all the friends in Germany,...*
>
> *In the Guardian's own handwriting:*
>
> *Dear and valued co-worker:*
>
> *I wish to add a few words in loving appreciation of your strenuous, your intelligent and devoted efforts for the spread and consolidation of our beloved Faith. May the Almighty bless your endeavours, deepen your understanding of the essentials and requirements of our beloved Cause, and enable you in these difficult and challenging days to promote its interests and consolidate its institutions,*
>
> *Your true brother,*
>
> *Shoghi*

On April 25, 1938, one month after Nazi Germany's *Anschluss* of Austria, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated "it made him immensely happy to realize that the friends in Germany and Austria have been again drawn together, and are closer than ever in the past. He hopes that the removal of the barriers which have hitherto so sadly separated the German and Austrian communities will mark the beginning of a new era of unprecedented growth and expansion in your affairs."

> *25 April 1938*

Dear Friends,

The postcard message which you had sent the Guardian on the occasion of Dr. Muhlschlegel's visit to Vienna, has just been received, and it made him immensely happy to realize that the friends in Germany and Austria have been again drawn together, and are closer than ever in the past. He hopes that the removal of the barriers which have hitherto so sadly separated the German and Austrian communities will mark the beginning of a new era of unprecedented growth and expansion in your affairs. He is certain that you are fully alive to the far-reaching possibilities which the present hour offers, and wishes you therefore to be happy and thankful, and confident in the blessings which the future has in store for you, and your dear co-workers in that land.

I take this opportunity of assuring you once more of his prayers for your welfare, protection and continued guidance, and reciprocating your very kind greetings,...

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Assuring you in person of my incessant prayers for your protection, guidance and happiness,

your true and grateful brother,

Shoghi

Comments

December 30. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís about funding for the completion of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the West, titling it "The Seal of Complete Triumph".

Original file: 0429.html (position #7)

December 30. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís about funding for the completion of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the West, titling it "The Seal of Complete Triumph".

> *THE SEAL OF COMPLETE TRIUMPH*
>
> *The association of the First Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the West with the hallowed memories of the Purest Branch and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's mother, recently re-interred under the shadow of the Báb's holy Shrine, inaugurates a new, and at long last the final phase of an enterprise which, thirty years ago, was providentially launched on the very day the remains of the Forerunner of our Faith were laid to rest by our beloved Master in the sepulchre specifically erected for that purpose on Mount Carmel. The birth of this holy enterprise, pregnant with such rich, such infinite possibilities, synchronized with, and was consecrated through, this historic event*

which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself has affirmed, constitutes the most signal act of the triple mission He had been prompted to perform. The site of the Temple itself was honored by the presence of Him Who, ever since this enterprise was initiated, had, through his messages and Tablets, bestowed upon it His special attention and care, and surrounded it with the marks of His unfailing solicitude. Its foundation-stone was laid by His own loving hands, on an occasion so moving that it has come to be regarded as one of the most stirring episodes of His historic visit to the North American continent. Its superstructure was raised as a direct consequence of the pent-up energies which surged from the breasts of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's lovers at a time when His sudden removal from their midst had plunged them into consternation, bewilderment and sorrow. Its external ornamentation was initiated and accelerated through the energizing influences which the rising and continually consolidating institutions of a divinely established Administrative Order had released in the midst of a community that had identified its vital interests with that Temple's destiny. The measures devised to hasten its completion were incorporated in a Plan which derives its inspiration from those destiny-shaping Tablets wherein, in bold relief, stands outlined the world mission entrusted by their Author to the American Bahá'í community. And finally, the Fund, designed to receive and dispose of the resources amassed for its prosecution, was linked with the memory and bore the name of her whose ebbing life was brightened and cheered by those tidings that unmistakably revealed to her the depth of devotion and the tenacity of purpose which animate the American believers in the cause of their beloved Temple. And now, while the Bahá'í world vibrates with emotion at the news of the transfer of the precious remains of both the Purest Branch and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's mother to a spot which, watched over by the Twin Holy Shrines and in the close neighborhood of the resting-place of the Greatest Holy Leaf, is to become the focus of the administrative institutions of the Faith at its world center, the mere act of linking the destiny of so far-reaching an undertaking with so significant an event in the Formative Period of our Faith will assuredly set the seal of complete triumph upon, and enhance the spiritual potentialities of, a work so significantly started and so magnificently executed by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the North American continent.

The Plan which your Assembly has suggested to raise the sum of fifty thousand dollars by next April, which will enable you to place the necessary contracts for the final completion of the entire First Story of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, meets with my unqualified approval. It was specially in order to initiate and encourage the progress of such a plan that I felt impelled to pledge the sum of one thousand

pounds in the memory of these two glorious souls who, apart from the Founders of our Faith and its Exemplar, tower together with the Greatest Holy Leaf, above the rank and file of the faithful.

The interval separating us from that date is admittedly short. The explosive forces which lie dormant in the international field may, ere the expiry of these fleeting months, break out in an eruption that may prove the most fateful that mankind has experienced. It is within the power of the organized body of the American believers to further demonstrate the imperturbability of their faith, the serenity of their confidence and the unyielding tenacity of their resolve.

We stand at the threshold of the decade within which the centenary of the birth of our Faith is to be celebrated. Scarcely more than four years stand between us and that glorious consummation. No community, no individual, neither in the East nor in the West, however afflictive the circumstances that now prevail, can afford to hesitate or falter. The few years immediately ahead are endowed with potencies that we can but dimly appreciate. Ours is the duty and privilege to utilize to the full the opportunities which these fate-laden years offer us. The American Bahá'í community, already responsible, over such a long period, for such heroic acts, under such severe handicaps, cannot and will not hesitate or falter. The past is a witness of their splendid triumphs. The future will be no less a witness of their final victory.

December 30, 1939

Comments

December 30. On this date in 2016, the Bahá’í World News Service reported on the Unity Foundation, "an organization started by a small group of Baha'is 25 years ago and inspired by the teachings of the Faith." The Administrator of Unity Foundation is Paul Arbab, son of Farzam Arbab.

Original file: 0428.html (position #6)

December 30. On this date in 2016, the Bahá’í World News Service reported on the Unity Foundation, "an organization started by a small group of Baha'is 25 years ago and inspired by the teachings of the Faith." The Administrator of Unity Foundation is Paul Arbab, son of Farzam Arbab.

"**Unity Foundation**, which works with Luxembourg's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and "a network of local development agencies assisting them in their efforts to build capacity

amongst populations to take charge of their own social and economic development" is governed by a board of directors which regularly meets to consult on the strategic direction of the organization. The day-to-day work is being carried out by the office team. Our external consultancy body, the [Bahá'í] Office of Social and Economic Development (OSED) in Haifa, Israel connects us to grass-root development agencies which have the capacity to work with external funding organization. OSED and the [Luxembourg] Ministry of Foreign Affairs act as two filters ensuring the quality and integrity of our projects."

Per Unity Foundation's "Annual Report 2015," the latest year for which one is available, in the section titled "Finances", "The figures include the support received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs."

"All our projects are co-financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Without the generous co-financing policy we would not be able to support so many wonderful projects." The total given is €548,240.

"The Ministry reimburses some part of our administrative costs." The figure given is €50,283.

The Administrator of Unity Foundation is **Paul Arbab**. "Born in the US, Paul grew up in Colombia. He holds an MBA and joined the board of Unity Foundation in January 2007. Since then he has been able to provide valuable input to the strategic direction of the Foundation. He is a proud father of two toddlers and strongly believes in the power of education."

Paul Arbab is the son of **Farzam Arbab**. Initially elected in 1993 to the Universal House of Justice, the supreme governing institution of the Bahá'í Faith, Farzam Arbab retired from that body in 2013. Before his election to the Universal House of Justice, in 1988, he was appointed to the International Teaching Center. The International Teaching Centre, whose seat is at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel, is composed of nine Counsellors appointed by the Universal House of Justice and tasked with duties to stimulate and coordinate the Continental Board of Counselors and assist the Universal House of Justice in matters relating to the teaching and protection of the faith. All of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as members of the International Teaching Centre. In 1980 he was appointed to the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Protection and Propagation of the Faith in the Americas, on which he served for eight years. From 1970 until 1980 he served as the Chairman for the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Colombia.

While in Colombia, Farzam Arbab was one of the founders of **FUNDAEC (Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences)**. He served as its Director from 1974 through 1988 and continues to serve on its board. FUNDAEC was established in 1974 by a group in Colombia who were looking for new strategies to develop the capacities of people and to generate knowledge in isolated regions of the country. The model, known as SAT (for "Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial, Spanish for "System for Tutorial Learning") started in 1980 and centers on the use of interactive workbooks facilitated by a tutor. In Colombia, these tutors are trained at the Center for Rural Education.

The SAT techniques Arbab helped develop at FUNDAEC have been applied to the Bahá'í community in the form of the **Ruhi Institute,** which was named after Arbab's father. Centered on Bahá'í study circles, the goal of the Ruhi Institute courses is to "evoke a transformative learning experience through a learner-centered, experiential, and collaborative approach facilitated by a tutor rather than an instructor, a teacher, or an expert." Among the principles of the Ruhi curriculum is the utilization of service projects to implement learning into tangible action. The Universal House of Justice has encouraged the emulation of the Ruhi model throughout the global Bahá'í community. According to one researcher, the Ruhi Institute's method has resulted in "nonhierarchical, self-initiated, self-organized small groups engaged in study, teaching, and action" and is "becoming the core of Bahá'í community life worldwide as the outcome of a process that has sought to nurture the spiritual life of individuals and families and to establish social foundations for the vision and practice of religious world citizenship." Paul Lample, another member of the Universal Hose of Justice, has stated "Doubtless the institute and its curriculum will continue to evolve, both in content and form, to a level of greater complexity in regions and nations within the framework of the administrative order throughout the various stages of the Divine Plan in the second century of the Formative Age."

FUNDAEC's current Director is **Bita Correa**. Aside from being FUNDAEC's current program director, Bita Correa participated as a member of the Bahá'í International Community's delegation to the 55th United Nations Commission for Social Development. A recent graduate of Bryn Mawr College, Bita Correa is the daughter of Haleh Arbab, Farzam Arbab's sister, and Gustavo Correa.

Haleh Arbab, is currently director of the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity, a non-profit educational and research organization "dedicated to building capacity in individuals, groups and institutions to contribute to prevalent discourses concerned with the betterment of society" through "working in collaboration with the Bahá'í International Community." Born in Iran and educated in the United States, Haleh Arbab previously lived

in Colombia from 1982 to 2005 where she worked with the FUNDAEC.

Haleh Arbab's husband and Bita Correa's father is **Gustavo Correa**. Since 2008, Gustavo Correa has been a member of the Universal House of Justice. Before his election to the Universal House of Justice, in 2005, he was appointed to the International Teaching Centre. Along with his brother-in-law, Farzam Arbab, Gustavo Correa was one of the founders of FUNDAEC and later served as its Director, the position currently held by his daughter, Bita Correa.

For a number of years now, Unity Foundation has collaborated with FUNDAEC and "since June 2013, Unity Foundation has renewed its collaboration with FUNDAEC."

> *Embracing oneness means rethinking prosperity and development*
>
> *30 December 2016*
>
> *LUXEMBOURG — Unity Foundation, an organization started by a small group of Baha'is 25 years ago and inspired by the teachings of the Faith, has been one of several Baha'i-inspired agencies that assist social and economic development organizations around the world to access essential funding. The challenge before it is how to facilitate the flow of funds from one part of the world to another while preserving and strengthening a local community's ownership and capacity to direct its own path of development.*
>
> *Baha'i endeavors for social and economic development operate on the principle that populations should be the protagonists of their own material, spiritual, and intellectual advancement, not just recipients or mere participants. The majority of such initiatives are sustained by resources in the local communities that are carrying them out. Some efforts continue to grow in scale and complexity and eventually require financial resources from outside the community to enable them to extend proven practices and have even greater impact.*
>
> *Agencies inspired by the Baha'i teachings, such as Unity Foundation, have been learning about raising financial resources in support of development initiatives that have reached a certain level of growth and complexity. In these instances, Baha'i institutions that have been following such organizations closely arrange contact with the Foundation.*
>
> *These projects fall mainly into two categories: those that provide education for*

children through the establishment of community-based elementary schools and those that develop the capacities of youth in rural areas to become promoters of community well-being.

"Guided by our principles, we do not initiate, carry out, or manage the development projects in other parts of the world," said Fernand Schaber, the President of Unity Foundation's Board of Directors. "We see ourselves as equal partners with those projects that receive funds. Our role is to represent their vision to the donor community in Luxembourg.

"We also do not choose the projects. They are recommended to us through certain Baha'i institutions. We have learned that working within this system helps us to avoid the many pitfalls that can arise in local communities when financial resources are not provided through appropriate channels."

A central element of the Foundation's understanding of development is its conception of prosperity.

"We recognize the importance of being prosperous in material means, infrastructure, and technology, but it is of equal, if not greater importance, for communities to be prosperous in family and societal unity, in harmony, in high-mindedness, in peace, in generosity, in justice, and in equality between men and women," explained Board of Directors member Angela Roldan. "The hope is that children in every society will grow up with a heightened awareness that the accumulation of wealth should not only benefit themselves but be a source of the wealth and happiness of others.

"From this perspective then, we do not adhere to the practice of dividing the world into groups of 'the developed' and 'the underdeveloped.' Every country in the world has a long way to go in learning how to reach true prosperity. What is required is a global process of learning, in which each nation and people, all on an equal footing, can contribute its share of insights and be seen as a protagonist along its own path of development. And this is the principle that we try to reflect in our relationships with our partners in other parts of the world," Dr. Roldan said.

In the context of arranging funds for projects around the world, the Foundation is learning how to contribute to the discourse on development in Luxembourg, drawing on the experiences being generated globally from the projects with which it works.

"The conversations we have with donors are not just about fund raising. More broadly, these conversations are raising consciousness about the concepts and principles central to development," said Yves Wiltgen, the Foundation's Public Discourse Officer. "We are promoting a dialogue around these ideas in different spaces, including with individual donors, in schools, in the media, and in special gatherings or other events.

"Interestingly, people see that insights generated in other parts of the world are also applicable to the development of Luxembourg. For example, knowledge is being gained about how communities can become united around higher aspirations and how people can take initiative to help others in their communities," continued Mr. Wiltgen.

The work of Unity Foundation has advanced in collaboration with the Luxembourg Government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which has developed a deep appreciation for the principles guiding the organization. Together, the Foundation and the Ministry have facilitated the flow of more than €3 million to projects in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia over the past five years.

On 19 November, Unity Foundation hosted a formal dinner to mark its twenty-fifth anniversary. One hundred sixty individuals attended the event at the Cercle Cite in Luxembourg. Guests included people from the business, media, and government sectors, as well as other individuals who have supported the Foundation's work.

"This event was a lot more than a celebration of twenty-five years of Unity Foundation," stated Mr. Wiltgen. "It is a sign of a certain level of consciousness that material wealth in one part of the world and its absence in others is not acceptable when we consider the whole world as one family."

Comments

December 30. On this date in 1979 the Universal House of Justice sent a cablegram announcing the death of Hand of the Cause of God and Knight of Bahá’u’lláh Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir, who had died of a heart attack at the age of 56 in Ecuador.

Original file: 0427.html (position #5)

December 30. On this date in 1979 the Universal House of Justice sent a cablegram announcing the death of Hand of the Cause of God and Knight of Bahá’u’lláh Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir who had passed away one day previous, on December 29, 1979. Rahmatu'llah Muhájir was a prominent fourth generation Bahá’í, born on April 4, 1923, in Iran. In 1954 he married Írán Furútan, the daughter of Hand of the Cause of God and Iran National Spiritual Assembly Member 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, who is known for his censorship of (devout Bahá’í scholar) Jinab-i Fadil's academic works. The newlyweds pioneered to the Mentawai Islands for which they were named Knights of Bahá’u’lláh by Shoghi Effendi in 1954. In 1958, Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi

Effendi. He died of a heart attack at the age of 56 in Ecuador.

The 25th anniversary of Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir's death was marked in Ecuador by a Growth and Victories conference and graveside ceremony, including a talk by his daughter, Gisu. His daughter Gisu Mohadjer Cook works at the World Bank in Washington, D.C., and lives in Potomac, Maryland. In 2012 she and her husband purchased the historic Dublin Inn in Dublin, New Hampshire where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed for three weeks in 1912, and donated it to the national Baha'i community. Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir's other daughter, Shabnam Rahnema, works as an attorney in London.

> *World Centre: PROFOUNDLY LAMENT UNTIMELY PASSING IN QUITO ECUADOR BELOVED HAND CAUSE RAHMATULLAH MUHAJIR FOLLOWING HEART ATTACK COURSE HIS LATEST SOUTH AMERICAN TOUR. UNSTINTED UNRESTRAINED OUTPOURING OF PHYSICAL SPIRITUAL ENERGIES BY ONE WHO OFFERED HIS ALL PATH SERVICE HAS NOW CEASED. POSTERITY WILL RECORD HIS DEVOTED SERVICES YOUTHFUL YEARS CRADLE FAITH HIS SUBSEQUENT UNIQUE EXPLOITS PIONEERING FIELD SOUTHEAST ASIA WHERE HE WON ACCOLADE KNIGHTHOOD BAHAULLAH HIS CEASELESS EFFORTS OVER TWO DECADES SINCE HIS APPOINTMENT HAND CAUSE STIMULATING IN MANY LANDS EAST WEST PROCESS ENTRY BY TROOPS. FRIENDS ALL CONTINENTS WHO MOURN THIS TRAGIC LOSS NOW SUDDENLY DEPRIVED COLLABORATION ONE WHO ENDEARED HIMSELF TO THEM THROUGH HIS GENTLENESS HIS LUMINOUS PERSONALITY HIS EXEMPLARY UNFLAGGING ZEAL HIS CREATIVE ENTHUSIASTIC APPROACH TO FULFILMENT ASSIGNED GOALS. URGE FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS BEFITTING HIS HIGH STATION UNIQUE ACHIEVEMENTS. MAY HIS RADIANT SOUL ABHA KINGDOM REAP RICH HARVEST HIS DEDICATED SELF-SACRIFICING SERVICES CAUSE GOD. (Cablegram from the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies 30 December 1979)*

Comments

December 31. On this date in 1993, an individual asked the Universal House of Justice a question about a reference to the Guardianship in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

December 31. On this date in 1993, an individual asked the Universal House of Justice a question about a reference to the Guardianship in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

> *The Universal House of Justice*
>
> *Department of the Secretariat*
>
> *11 March 1994*
>
> *[To an individual]*
>
> *Dear Bahá'í Friend,*
>
> *Your letter of 31 December 1993 was received and referred to us for a response.*
>
> *You quote the reference in paragraph 42 of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and ask how this can be understood as an anticipation of the institution of the Guardianship.*
>
> *As you correctly state, this passage relates entirely to the disposition of*

> *endowments dedicated to charity. In it Bahá'u'lláh provides that the authority in this matter passes, after Him, to the Aghṣán. The Aghṣán comprise not only the sons of Bahá'u'lláh, but all His male descendants. Thus in His Will and Testament 'Abdu'l-Bahá refers to Shoghi Effendi as "the chosen branch," and provides that if the eldest son of the Guardian did not possess the qualities which would befit him to be appointed as his successor, the Guardian should "choose another branch [Ghuṣn] to succeed him." There is also a letter in which Shoghi Effendi refers to his brother, Ḥusayn, as a "Ghuṣn."*
>
> *It should be noted that, although only two of the Aghṣán are explicitly mentioned in the Kitáb-i-'Ahd (the Ghuṣn-i-A'ẓam and the Ghuṣn-i-Akbar, namely 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí), paragraph 42 of the Aqdas refers to more than two. Arabic nouns have three forms for number:*
>
> *Singular Branch Ghuṣn*
>
> *Dual two branches Ghuṣnán*
>
> *Plural more than two branches Aghṣán*
>
> *The Aqdas foresees a hereditary function for the Aghṣán in relation to the disposition of endowments dedicated to charity. Paragraph 42 of the Aqdas continues by stating that "after them" [i.e. the Aghṣán] this authority passes "to the House of Justice—should it be established in the world by then." This envisages the possibility that the line of Aghṣán would come to an end before the Universal House of Justice came into existence, which is, in fact, what happened on the death of Shoghi Effendi.*
>
> *In this way, therefore, this passage can be seen as anticipating the institution of the Guardianship....*
>
> *With loving Bahá'í greetings,*
>
> *Department of the Secretariat*

While the Guardianship was to be a perpetual institution of the Administrative Order, it ceased to exist after the death of Shoghi Effendi because he died having violated Bahá'u'lláh's command in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas that "Unto everyone hath been enjoined the writing of a will." Having no children of his own and having declared every living male

descendant of Bahá'u'lláh a Covenant-breaker, Shoghi Effendi left no eligible candidates for the office of Guardian, posing a serious problem given his assertion that "In this Dispensation, divine guidance flows on to us in this world after the Prophet's ascension, through first the Master, and then the Guardians." He had furthermore stated in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* that...

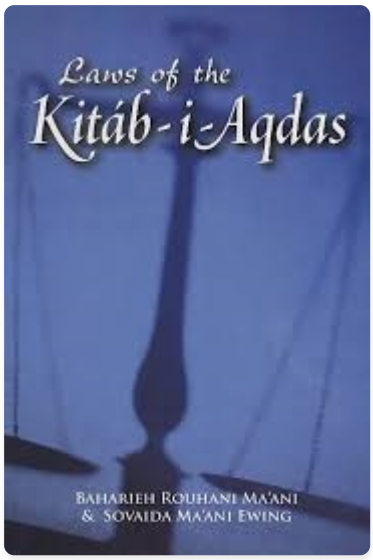
> *Divorced from the institution of the Guardianship the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh would be mutilated and permanently deprived of that hereditary principle which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written, has been invariably upheld by the Law of God. "In all the Divine Dispensations," He states, in a Tablet addressed to a follower of the Faith in Persia, "the eldest son hath been given extraordinary distinctions. Even the station of prophethood hath been his birthright." Without such an institution the integrity of the Faith would be imperiled, and the stability of the entire fabric would be gravely endangered. Its prestige would suffer, the means required to enable it to take a long, an uninterrupted view over a series of generations would be completely lacking, and the necessary guidance to define the sphere of the legislative action of its elected representatives would be totally withdrawn.*

So fundamental was the office of the Guardianship, that Bahá'í literature was significantly altered subsequent to Shoghi Effendi's death, with the notable removal of references to "The First Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith," the "first and present Guardian," and "the lineage of succeeding Guardians." In some cases, references to the Guardian have been replaced or amended with "the Universal House of Justice" and in other instances references to the duties of the Guardian that were in the present tense have been changed to the past tense, indicating that the Guardianship has ceased.

From 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament*...

> *O ye beloved of the Lord! It is incumbent upon the Guardian of the Cause of God to appoint in his own life-time him that shall become his successor, that differences may not arise after his passing. He that is appointed must manifest in himself detachment from all worldly things, must be the essence of purity, must show in himself the fear of God, knowledge, wisdom and learning. Thus, should the first-born of the Guardian of the Cause of God not manifest in himself the truth of the words:—"The child is the secret essence of its sire," that is, should he not inherit of*

> *the spiritual within him (the Guardian of the Cause of God) and his glorious lineage not be matched with a goodly character, then must he, (the Guardian of the Cause of God) choose another* branch *to succeed him."*



Comments

December 31. On this date in 1921, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís that "we, who follow in the Master's footsteps will ever bear in mind His sure and emphatic promise that your fatherland's present plight will erelong be turned into a material prosperity and a spiritual regeneration more ..."

Original file: 0425.html (position #3)

December 31. On this date in 1921, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to German Bahá'ís who he addressed as "The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful in Hamburg, Gera, Schwerin, Rostock and Warnemunde" in which he said, "we, who follow in the Master's footsteps will ever bear in mind His sure and emphatic promise that your fatherland's present plight will erelong be turned into a material prosperity and a spiritual regeneration more glorious than ever before, and will offer to the eyes of the world a vast, rich, and ready field for the propagation of the Bahá'í principles.

The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful in Hamburg, Gera, Schwerin, Rostock and Warnemunde. My dearly-beloved brethren and sisters in the love of God!

The letter of our beloved and highly-esteemed fellow-worker, Dr. Grossmann, together with the enclosed Bahá'í leaflets and reports, as well as the most welcome and encouraging circular letters sent out by the Hamburg and Gera Bahá'í Assemblies, have all been received and read with pride and gratitude. So unexpected were these messages that were conveyed to us from those uttermost corners of Germany, and so beautiful their spirit, that we all felt at once surprised, gladdened and inspired. How wondrous, how all-conquering is the Spirit of our beloved Master which, despite the terrible distress now reigning all over Germany, and notwithstanding the confusion and the gross materialism in which mankind is now sunk, is causing these vigorous, radiant and hopeful Bahá'í centres to be established, linked together and strengthened, in even the uttermost regions of your great country.

I have shared all your news with the friends in the Holy Land, and will forward them to all the Bahá'í centres throughout the East, that the friends of 'Abdu'l-Bahá may realize more deeply than ever how His promise is being fulfilled. The Haifa Spiritual Assembly will soon send you a special message acknowledging the receipt of your circular letters and will be glad to share your news with the friends throughout the East and the West.

Germany is at present in the throes of unprecedented afflictions, and the immediate future may seem still dark and disquieting, yet ***we, who follow in the Master's footsteps will ever bear in mind His sure and emphatic promise that your fatherland's present plight will erelong be turned into a material prosperity and a spiritual regeneration more glorious than ever before, and will offer to the eyes of the world a vast, rich, and ready field for the propagation of the Bahá'í principles.***

Let us then take heart, and endeavour to deepen in spirit, to reinforce our numbers, so that, however depressing and distracting the conditions around us may be, we may persevere, with clear vision, steadfast hope, and united effort to achieve the triumph of the Bahá'í Revelation throughout the world.

> *I am eagerly awaiting every news you may wish to send me, for I thirst after the glad tidings of the progress of the Cause in your mighty and promising land.*
>
> *Your fellow-worker,*
>
> *Shoghi*

On September 25, 1934, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi addressed to the Bahá'ís of Geislingen and Goppingen, stating that "he has gathered a very good impression about the conditions of the Cause in your centre" and that he had "the brightest hopes for the future expansion of the Faith not only in your two localities but throughout Germany as a whole."

> *25 September 1934 [The Bahá'ís of Geislingen and Goppingen]*
>
> *Dear Friends and co-workers,*
>
> *On behalf of the Guardian I wish to acknowledge the receipt of your deeply appreciated message of August 19th written through the care of dear Mr. Schultheiss, and to thank you for it, as well as for the beautiful photographs which you have been most kind in sending to him. From them all he has gathered* ***a very good impression about the conditions of the Cause in your centre,*** *and was much encouraged to witness the beautiful spirit of fellowship and of service which is animating your group. He cherishes, indeed,* ***the brightest hopes for the future expansion of the Faith not only in your two localities but throughout Germany as a whole.*** *He is ardently praying that the beloved Master's promises to that effect may gradually and by means of your painstaking and continued labours be completely realized. In the meanwhile he wishes you to persevere in your efforts for the study and the spread of the Teachings, and to confidently and quietly toil for the future establishment of Bahá'u'lláh's world order in your country.*
>
> *His prayers on behalf of each and every one of you will be continually offered to God, that through His guidance and love you may individually and collectively make a steady advancement in His Cause.*
>
> *With hearty greetings and good wishes to you all,*

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Dearly-beloved co-workers:

I was so pleased to receive your most welcome message. Any letter bearing such evidences of exemplary devotion to the Cause of God is a source of immense joy to my heart. I will most assuredly pray for you all and cherish the brightest hopes for your future contribution to the spread of our glorious Faith. Persevere and never feel depressed or discouraged. May the Almighty enable you to mirror forth the glory and splendour of this stupendous Revelation.

Your true and grateful brother,

Shoghi

On February 11, 1934, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to a German Bahá'í stating about the Nazi government that "obedience to the regulations and orders of the state is indeed, the sacred obligation of every true and loyal Bahá'í" and that "our German friends are under the sacred obligation to whole-heartedly obey the existing political regime, whatever be their personal views and criticisms of its actual working. There is nothing more contrary to the spirit of the Cause than open rebellion against the governmental authorities of a country, specially if they do not interfere in and do not oppose the inner and sacred beliefs and religious convictions of the individual. And there is every reason to believe that the present regime in Germany, which has thus far refused to trample upon the domain of individual conscience in all matters pertaining to religion will never encroach upon it in the near future, unless some unforeseen and unexpected changes take place. And this seems to be doubtful at present."

11 February 1934

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

I am charged by the Guardian to thank you for your letter of Jan. 30th as well as for the enclosed pamphlet containing the address delivered by Herr Hitler on Oct. 14th, 1933, on the subject of Germany's attitude towards peace, all of which he read with deepest care and sustained interest. He wishes me to convey to you and to all the members of your German National Assembly and through them to all the followers of the Faith in Germany his views on the present conditions in that land,

and particularly in their relation to the nature and scope of the Bahá'í activities of our German believers.

At the outset it should be made indubitably clear that the Bahá'í Cause being essentially a religious movement of a spiritual character stands above every political party or group, and thus cannot and should not act in contravention to the principles, laws, and doctrines of any government. ***Obedience to the regulations and orders of the state is indeed, the sacred obligation of every true and loyal Bahá'í.*** *Both Bahá'u'lláh and `Abdu'l-Bahá have urged us all to be submissive and loyal to the political authorities of our respective countries. It follows, therefore, that* ***our German friends are under the sacred obligation to whole-heartedly obey the existing political regime, whatever be their personal views and criticisms of its actual working. There is nothing more contrary to the spirit of the Cause than open rebellion against the governmental authorities of a country, specially if they do not interfere in and do not oppose the inner and sacred beliefs and religious convictions of the individual. And there is every reason to believe that the present regime in Germany which has thus far refused to trample upon the domain of individual conscience in all matters pertaining to religion will never encroach upon it in the near future, unless some unforeseen and unexpected changes take place. And this seems to be doubtful at present.***

For whereas the friends should obey the government under which they live, even at the risk of sacrificing all their administrative affairs and interests, they should under no circumstances suffer their inner religious beliefs and convictions to be violated and transgressed by any authority whatever. ***A distinction of a fundamental importance must, therefore, be made between spiritual and administrative matters. Whereas the former are sacred and inviolable, and hence cannot be subject to compromise, the latter are secondary and can consequently be given up and even sacrificed for the sake of obedience to the laws and regulations of the government. Obedience to the state is so vital a principle of the Cause that should the authorities in Germany decide to-day to prevent the Bahá'ís from holding any meeting or publishing any literature they should obey and be as submissive as our Russian believers have thus far been under the Soviet regime. But, as already pointed out, such an allegiance is confined merely to administrative matters which if checked can only***

retard the progress of the Faith for some time. In matters of belief, however, no compromise whatever should be allowed, even though the outcome of it be death or expulsion

There is one more point to be emphasized in this connection. The principle of obedience to government does not place any Bahá'í under the obligation of identifying the teachings of his Faith with the political program enforced by the government. For such an identification, besides being erroneous and contrary to both the spirit as well as the form of the Bahá'í message, would necessarily create a conflict within the conscience of every loyal believer.

For reasons which are only too obvious the Bahá'í philosophy of social and political organization cannot be fully reconciled with the political doctrines and conceptions that are current and much in vogue to-day. The wave of nationalism, so aggressive and so contagious in its effects, which has swept not only over Europe but over a large part of mankind is, indeed, the very negation of the gospel of peace and of brotherhood proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. The actual trend in the political world is, indeed, far from being in the direction of the Bahá'í teachings. The world is drawing nearer and nearer to a universal catastrophe which will mark the end of a bankrupt and of a fundamentally defective civilization.

From such considerations we can well conclude that we as Bahá'ís can in no wise identify the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh with man-made creeds and conceptions, which by their very nature are impotent to save the world from the dangers with which it is being so fiercely and so increasingly assailed.

The Guardian hopes that these brief explanations will be sufficient to guide our German National Assembly in their efforts to safeguard and promote the interests of the Faith, and that through them they will be given a new vision of the Cause and a fresh determination to carry forward its message to the world at large.

With greetings and best wishes to you and to all the friends in Germany,...

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Dear and valued co-worker:

I wish to add a few words in loving appreciation of your strenuous, your intelligent and devoted efforts for the spread and consolidation of our beloved Faith. May the Almighty bless your endeavours, deepen your understanding of the essentials and

requirements of our beloved Cause, and enable you in these difficult and challenging days to promote its interests and consolidate its institutions,

Your true brother,

Shoghi

Comments

December 31. On this date in 1939, Sara Blomfield, an early leading member of the Bahá'í Faith in the British Isles, died. She had converted to the Bahá'í Faith in 1907, eight years after the death of her late husband Arthur Blomfield, through whose knighting in 1889 she became titled "Lady."

Original file: 0424.html (position #2)

December 31. On this date in 1939, Sara Blomfield, an early leading member of the Bahá'í Faith in the British Isles passed away. She had converted to the Bahá'í Faith in 1907, eight years after the death of her late husband Arthur Blomfield, through whose knighting in 1889 she became titled "Lady." Her notes of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's speeches in Paris became the basis of the book *Paris Talks*, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá tited her "Sitárih Khanum."

After the passing of 'Abdu'l-Baha in 1921, Blomfield accompanied Shoghi Effendi and his

sister Ruhangiz, who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker, on their trip from Britain to Haifa. While in Haifa, she interviewed members of Bahá'u'lláh's family. Those recorded recollections, together with her account of the days when she hosted 'Abdu'l-Bahá in London, make up the contents of her book, *The Chosen Highway*.

The Chosen Highway chronicles in some detail how 'Abdu'l-Bahá aided the British against the Ottomans during World War I. For example...

> *We learned that when the British marched into Haifa there was some difficulty about the commissariat. The officer in command went to consult the Master. "I have corn," was the reply.*
>
> *"But for the army?" said the astonished soldier.*
>
> *"I have corn for the British Army," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá.*
>
> *He truly walked the Mystic way with practical feet. [footnote: Lady Blomfield often recounted how the corn pits proved a safe hiding-place for the corn, during the occupation of the Turkish army. -Ed.]*

and later...

> *The British Government, with its usual gesture of appreciating a heroic act, conferred a knighthood upon 'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbas, Who accepted this honour as a courteous gift "from a just king."*
>
> *The dignitaries of the British crown from Jerusalem were gathered in Haifa, eager to do honour to the Master, Whom every one had come to love and reverence for His life of unselfish service. An imposing motor-car had been sent to bring 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the ceremony. The Master, however, could not be found. People were sent in every direction to look for Him, when suddenly from an unexpected side He appeared, alone, walking His kingly walk, with that simplicity of greatness which always enfolded Him.*
>
> *The faithful servant, Isfandiyar, whose joy it had been for many years to drive the Master on errands of mercy, stood sadly looking on at the elegant motor-car which awaited the honoured guest.*

> *"No longer am I needed."*
>
> *At a sign from Him, Who knew the sorrow, old Isfandiyar rushed off to harness the horse, and brought the carriage out at the lower gate, whence 'Abdu'l-Bahá was driven to a side entrance of the garden of the Governorate of Phoenicia.*
>
> *So Isfandiyar was needed and happy.*

Further collaboration is documented in *Chapter V: Danger to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, His Family and Friends, and How it was Averted*

Comments

December 31. On this date in 2005, an individual wrote the NSA of the U.S. regarding "its decision to cease to distribute books and other materials published, produced or marketed by Kalima´t Press" which it said "include material that is harmful to the interests of the Baha´'i´ Faith."

Original file: 0423.html (position #1)

December 31. On this date in 2005, an individual wrote the NSA of the U.S. regarding "its decision to cease to distribute books and other materials published, produced or marketed by Kalima´t Press" which it said was "in light of the pattern and motives of Kalima´t Press in promoting books over the years that include material that is harmful to the interests of the Baha´'i´ Faith."

Letter from the National Spiritual Assembly to an individual, January 2006

January 30, 2006

Dear Baha´'i´ Friend,

The National Spiritual Assembly has received your email messages of December 31, 2005 and January 10, 2006 and appreciates the concerns you have shared in response to its decision to cease to distribute books and other materials published, produced or marketed by Kalima´t Press. First, we wish to assure you that the National Assembly has no issues with your titles ____. As you state, the manuscripts for these books were properly submitted to the National Assembly for literature review and subsequently passed.

Our decision to cease to distribute books and other items handled by Kalima´t Press was reached, as indicated in our December 29, 2005 letter to all Local Spiritual Assemblies, not so much because of any specific titles but rather in light of the pattern and motives of Kalima´t Press in promoting books over the years that include material that is harmful to the interests of the Baha´'i´ Faith. *You have, in your own letter, given a good assessment of the problems inherent in such action. However, continued support of Kalima´t Press under these circumstances, through distribution of its products, would be illogical and contradictory to the principles and purposes of a Baha´'i´ institution.*

Regarding your suggestion that the National Assembly identify for the friends those titles that it finds inimical to the interests of the Faith, we are sure you will appreciate upon reflection that we are not interested in creating a list of banned books. ***As to the distribution of those titles of which the Assembly approves, this has been the approach for a number of years and has only emboldened and enabled Kalima´t Press to carry more harmful titles.*** *Individuals are entirely free to purchase any books and other items they choose through Kalima´t Press or any other publisher or distributor. The National Assembly has simply taken the step of terminating institutional support of a company that has for many years exhibited a disregard for the repeated guidance and admonishments of Baha´'i´ institutions to disengage itself from affiliation with and promotion of material that harms the Faith to which it professes allegiance.*

The National Assembly appreciates the seriousness of its decision and assures you

> *that it was not taken precipitously. We regret the distress this action has caused you and your family, but we are confident that the steps you have already initiated to ameliorate this immediate challenge and your steadfast allegiance to the institutions of the Faith will in the end provide resolution and attract the confirmations of the Blessed Beauty.*
>
> *You and your family are lovingly remembered in our prayers. May your every devoted endeavor on behalf of the glorious Cause of the Blessed Beauty be divinely assisted and abundantly confirmed.*
>
> *With loving Baha´i´ greetings,*
>
> *[National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States]*

Comments

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